THE RARE JEWEL OF CHRISTIAN Contentment.

Wherein is ſhewed;

1. *What* CONTENTMENT *is.*
2. *The Holy Art or Myſtery of it.*
3. *Several* Leſſons *that Chriſt Teacheth, to work the Heart to* Contentment.
4. *The Excellencies of it.*
5. *The Evils of Murmuring.*
6. *The Aggravations of the ſin of Murmuring.*

By Jeremiah Burroughs.

The firſt of the Eleven Volums that are Publiſhed by

Thomas Goodwin, William Greenhil, Sydrach Sympſon, Philip Nye, William Bridge, John Yates, William Adderly.

London: Printed by *Peter Cole*, Printer and Book-ſeller, at the ſign of the Printing-preſs, in *Cornhil*, near the *Royal Exchange*. 1659.

To the Reader.

THis worthy Man, especially in his latter times, was surrounded (through Gods blessing on him) with a very great confluence of what might give forth *Contentment* to a vast Spirit of his Rank and Calling. He was enriched with a large measure of Abilities and Opportunities in serving his Lord, to glorifie whom, and do much good to others, is the divine part of a man gracious (which he was) the highest and most solid Satisfaction, and in many respects exceeds what personal Communion with God, singly considered, brings in) Besides, he lived and died in a fulness of honor and esteem with the best of men, of Saints; Yea, the worst of enemies: Likewise of Estate, and outward Comforts within his Sphære and Rank. all which might and did afford *Contentment* to what was outward in him. In the midst of these, his study was to find out a more sublime way, and hidden art of Self sufficiency, than was in the power of all things to contribute or teach; Such a skill as did not onely poise and compose his spirit in the present enjoyment of all, but might fortifie and furnish him with provision for the future against the loss of all, in times wherein *no man knoweth what evil will be in the Earth.* This Mark his first Lines shew he shot at. This Art some Philosophers of old pretended themselves Masters of, and to instruct others in, through the assistance of Natural and Moral Elements, elevated to the utmost height their Principles could carry them, but in vain. Their Chymistry in this kind being able to produce no more but a sullen obstinacy and obdurateness of mind. The *Natural Spirit of a Man*, feeling it self greater than all Creatures, gathering up, and consolidating it self into it self, is able (as *Solomon* saies) *to sustain its own and all other infirmities.* But that *Autarchy* this Author here presents, is a Mystery, which *none of these Princes of the World know, or the Wisdom of Man teacheth, but the Holy Ghost teacheth*; and which few, but those that are *perfect* do attain; Teaching the Soul to deny it self into weakness, emptiness, in, and to it self, and all things else; and thus dissolved to unite it self to Him who only hath blessedness and All-sufficiency, with whom associated and made intimate, it melts it self into all His Interests, making them its own, and thereby comes to have all that Al-sufficiency of the High God to be its Self-sufficiency: And then, What state can that Soul be in, wherein it may not be content? seeing it hath God to be the chiefest comfort in its best times and only comfort in its worst. This though it be the inheritance of every Saint, in the right and title to it, yet the possession and injoyment of it, depends upon an improvement of this inheritance, and that upon a skil which is to be *learned* by experience and much exercise (as *Paul* speaks) *I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be Content.* This piece of learning this serious spirited Man inured

ured himself into, and *digging* for it as *Rubies* (as *Solomons* Scholler for Wisdom) hath found it, and hath hewn forth this *JEWEL* (a Title given neither by Himself, nor by *Us* the Publishers, to the Subject it self, yet the Materials themselves deserving it) out of the Rock, & hath artificially cut it) that the innate Rayes of this so glorious a Grace might shine forth to others. And here it comes to be presented, though set forth as the richest *Jewels* are, often for a while, in ruder metals until bargained, but then are placed in tablets worthy of them. The only seat this is ordained for, is, the precious Tablets of mens Hearts, in, and from which alone the native lustre of it will be made conspicuous. Reader, buy it, set and wear it there, and it *shall* (as *Solomon* speaks, *Prov.* 3. 22. *&c.*) *Be life unto thy soul, and grace unto thy neck: Thou shalt not be afraid when thou liest down; Yea, thy sleep shall be sweet unto thee: for the Lord will be thy confidence.*

Thomas Godwin,
Sydrach Sympson,
William Greenhil,
Philip Nye,
William Bridge,
John Yates,
William Adderly.

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11 Satans power to tempt and Christs Love to, and Care of his People under Temptation.

12 Thankfulness required in every Condition.

13 Grace for Grace.

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1 That the end why the Saints receive all Glorious Grace, is, That they may be one, as the Father and Christ are one.

2 That God the Father loveth the Faithful, as he loveth Jesus Christ.

3 That our Savior desireth to have the Faithful in Heaven with himself.

4 That the Happiness of our being in Heaven, is to see Christs Glory.

5 That there is much wanting in the Knowledg of Gods Love, in the most able Saints.

6 That the Lord Christ lends daily Direction, according to the daily need of his Servants.

7 That it is the desire and endeavor of our Savior, that the dearest of Gods Love, which was bestowed on himself, should be given to his faithful Servants.

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FINIS.

THE

THE RARE JEWEL OF CHRISTIAN CONTENTMENT.

PHILIPPIANS, 4. 11.

For I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.

Stepny, July. 27 1645.

HERE is a very *seasonable Cordial* to revive the drooping spirits of the Saints in these sad and sinking times: For the *hour of temptation* is already come upon all the world to try the Inhabitants of the earth; and in special, this is the day of *Jacobs* troubles in our own bowels.

Our *great Apostle* experimentally holds forth in this Gospel-Text, the very life and soul of all practical Divinity; wherein we may plainly reade his own proficiency in Christs School; and what lesson every Christian that would evidence the power and growth of Godliness in his own soul, must necessarily learn from him.

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FINIS.

THE

THE RARE JEWEL OF CHRISTIAN CONTENTMENT.

PHILIPPIANS, 4. 11.

Stepny, July. 27 1645.

For I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.

HERE is a very *seasonable Cordial* to revive the drooping spirits of the Saints in these sad and sinking times: For the *hour of temptation* is already come upon all the world to try the Inhabitants of the earth; and in special, this is the day of *Jacobs* troubles in our own bowels.

Our *great Apostle* experimentally holds forth in this Gospel-Text, the very life and soul of all practical Divinity; wherein we may plainly reade his own proficiency in Christs School; and what lesson every Christian that would evidence the power and growth of Godlines in his own soul, must necessarily learn from him.

These words are brought in by *Paul*, as a plain argument to perswade the Philippians that he did not seek after great things in the world, and that he sought not theirs, but them: He did not pass for a great estate; he had better things to take up his heart withal. I do not speak (saith he) in respect of want, [*For*] whether I have or have not, my heart is fully satisfied, I have enough; *I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.*

I have learned.] Contentment in every condition is a great Art, a special Mysterie: It is to be learned and so to be learned as a Mysterie; And therefore vers. 12. he affirms, *I know how to be abased and I know how to abound, every where and in all things* μεμύημαι. *I am instructed:* The word * which is translated [*Instructed*] μυστήριον. is derived from that word * which signifies *Mystery*; and it is as much as if he had said, I have learned the mystery of this business. Contentment is to be learned as a great mysterie; and those that are throughly trained up in that art have learned a deep *Mystery*; The which is, as *Sampsons* riddle to a natural man. [*I have learned it.*] It is not now to learn; neither had I it at first; I have attained it though with much a do, and now by the grace of God I am become master of this Art.

In whatsoever State I am] The word [*State*] is not in the Ori- ἐν οἷς εἰμι ginal, but, * *In what I am*, that is, in whatsoever concerns or befals me, whether I have little or nothing at all.

αὐτάρκης, εἶναι. *Therewith to be content*] The word which we render *Content* here, hath in the Original much elegancy and fulness of signification in it. In strictness of phrase it is only attributed unto God, who hath stiled himself *God Alsufficient*, as resting wholly satisfied in and with himself alone; but he is pleased freely to communicate of his fulness to the creature, so that from God in Christ the Saints *receive grace for grace*, *Joh.* 1. 16. In so much that there is in them an answerableness of the same grace in their proportion that is in Christ. And in this sence *Paul* saith I have a *Self-sufficiency*, as the word notes.

But hath *Paul* a self sufficiency you will say? How are we sufficient of our selves? Our Apostle affirms in another case, *That we are not sufficient of our selves to think any thing as of our selves?* 2 *Cor.* 3. 5. His meaning therfore must be, I find a sufficiency

of

of satisfaction in my own heart, through the Grace of Christ that is in me; though I have not outward comforts and worldly accomodations to supply my necessities, yet I enjoy portion enough betwixt Christ and my own soul abundantly to satisfie me in every condition. And this interpretation is suitable to that place, *Pro.* 14. 14. *A good man is satisfied from himself*, and agreeable to what he verifies of himself in another place; that *though he had nothing, yet he possessed all things*; because he had right to the covenant and promise, which virtually contains all, and an interest in Christ the fountain and good of all, and having that, no marvel he saith that in whatsoever state he was in, he was content. Thus you have the genuine interpretation of the Text. I shall not make any division of the words, because I take them only to prosecute that *one duty* most necessary, *viz.* The quieting and comforting the hearts of Gods people under the troubles and changes they meet withall, in these heart shaking times, And the Doctrinal conclusion is in brief this.

Doct. *That to be well skil'd in the mystery of Christian Contentment is the Duty, Glory, and Excellency of a Christian.*

This Evangelical truth is held forth sufficiently in Scripture; yet take one or two paralel places more for the confirmation of it. 1 *Tim.* 6. 6, and 8. you have both the duty expresst, and the glory thereof: *Having food and raiment* (saith vers. 8.) *let us therwith be content*, there is the duty; *But godliness with Contentment is great gain*, vers. 6. there is the glory and excellency of it: as if godliness were not gain except there were Contentment withal. The like exhortation you have in *Heb.* 13. 5. *Let your conversation be without Covetousness, and be content with such things as you have.* I do not find any Apostle or Writer of Scripture treat so much of the spiritual mystery of Contentment as this our Apostle hath done throughout his Epistles.

For the cleer opening and proving of this practical conclusion, I shall indeavor to demonstrate these four things;

First, The nature of this Christian Contentment, what it is.

Secondly, The Art and Mystery of it.

Thirdly, What those lessons are that must be learn'd to work the heart to contentment.

Fourthly, Wherein the glorious excellencies of this grace doth principally consist.

Concerning the first, take this description: *Christian Contentmen is that sweet, inward, quiet, gracious frame of spirit, freely submitting to, and taking complacency in Gods wise, and fatherly dispose in every condition.*

I shall break open this description, for it is a box of precious Ointment, very comfortable and useful for troubled hearts, in troubled times and conditions.

First, *Contentment* (I say) *is a sweet* [*inward*] *heart-thing, it is a work of the spirit within doors*: It is not only a not-seeking help to our selves by outward violence, or a forbearance of discontented murmuring expressions, in froward words and carriages against God or others; but it is the inward submission of the heart. *Psal.* 62. 1. *Truly, my soul waiteth upon God*; *and ver.* 5. *My soul wait thou only upon God* so it is in your Books; but the words may be translated as rightly, *My soul be thou silent unto God*; *Hold thy peace O my soul*: Not only the tongue must hold it's peace, but the soul must be silent: Many may sit down silently, forbearing discontented expressions, yet are inwardly swollen with discontentment; now this manifesteth a perplexed distemper and a great frowardness in their hearts: And God notwithstanding their outward silence hears the peevish fretting language of their souls. The shoe may be smooth and neat without, whilst the flesh is pinched within: There may be much calmness and stilness outwardly, and yet wonderful confusion, bitterness, disturbance and vexation within. Some are so weak that they are not able to contain the disquietness of their own spirits, but in words and behaviour discover what woful perturbations there are within, their spirits being like the raging Sea casting forth nothing but mire and dirt, being not only troublesome to themselves but to all those they live with: Others there are who are able to keep in such distempers of heart, (as *Judas* did when he betrayed Christ with a kiss,) but still they boyl inwardly and eat like a Canker: As *David* speaks concerning som whose words are smoo-

ther

ther than honey, and butter, and yet have war in their hearts; and as he saith in another place, whilst *I kept silence my bones waxed old*; so these, whilst there is a serene calme upon their tongues, have yet blustring stormes in their spirits, and whilst they keep silence, their hearts are troubled, and even worn away with anguish and vexation; they have peace and quiet outwardly, but war from the unruly and turbulent workings of their hearts, that is within. If the attainment to true Contentment were as easie as keeping quiet outwardly, there need be no great learning of it; it might be had with less skil and strength than an Apostle had; yea than an ordinary Christian hath or may have. Therefore certainly there is a great deal more in it than can be attained by common gifts, and ordinary power of reason, which often bridles in nature. It is a heart-business.

Secondly, *It is the* [*quiet*] *of the heart*; All is sedate and stil there, and to understand this the better; This quiet gracious frame of spirit. It is not opposed.

1. *To a due sense of affliction.* God doth give leave to his people to be sensible of what they suffer: Christ doth not say do not count that a crosse which is a cross, but take up your cross dayly. As it is in the body natural, if the body takes Physick and is not able to bear it but presently vomits it up, or if it be not at all sensible, if it stir not the body; either of those waies the Physick doth no good, but argues the body much distempered and will hardly be cured. So it is with the spirits of men under afflictions; if either they cannot bear Gods potions but cast them up again or are not sensible of them, and their souls are no more stir'd by them than the body is by a draught of small beer, it is a sad symptome that their souls are in a dangerous and almost incurable condition. So that this inward quietness is not in opposition to the sense of affliction: for indeed there were no true Contentment if you were not apprehensive and sensible of your afflictions when God is angry. It is not opposed.

2. *To an orderly making our moan and complaint to God & to our friends.* Though a Christian ought to be quiet under Gods correcting hand, yet he may without any breach of Christian

Contentment

contentment complain to God; (as one of the Ancients saith) though not with a tumultuous clamour and shrieking out in a perplexed passion, yet in a quiet still submissive way he may unbosom his heart unto God. And likewise communicate his sad condition to his gracious friends, shewing them how God hath dealt with him and how heavy the affliction is upon him, that they may speak a word in due season to his wearied soul. It is not opposed,

To all lawful seeking out for help unto another condition, or simply endeavoring to be delivered out of the present affliction by the use of lawful means. No, I may say in provision for my deliverance and use Gods means, waiting on him because I know not but that it may be his will to alter my condition, and so far as he leads me I may follow his providence, it is but my duty. God is thus far mercifully indulgent to our weakness, and he will not take it ill at our hands if by earnest and importunate prayer we seek unto him for deliverance, till we know his good pleasure therein. And certainly thus seeking for help with such a submission and holy resignation of spirit to be delivered when God will and as God will, and how God will, so that our wills are melted into the will of God, this is no opposition to the quietness which God requires in a contented spirit.

Quest. But then, what is this quietness of spirit opposed unto?

Answ. *To murmuring and repining at the hand of God; as the discontented Israelites often did,* which if we our selves cannot endure either in our children or servants much Less can God bear it in us.

2. *To vexing and fretting*; which is a degree beyond murmuring. It is a speech I remember of an Heathen, A wise man may grieve under, but not be vexed with his afflictions. There is a vast difference betwixt a kindly grieving and a distempered vexation.

3. *To tumultuousness of spirit:* When the thoughts run distractingly and work in a confused manner, so that the affections are like the unruly multitude in the *Acts*, who knew not for what end they were come together. The Lord expects that you should be silent under his rod, and as he said in *Act.* 19. 36. *You ought*

ought to be quiet and to do nothing rashly.

4. *To unsetledness and unfixedness of spirit, whereby the heart is taken off from the present duty that God requires in our several relations, both towards God, our selves, and others.* We should prize duty at a higher rate than to be taken off by every trivial occasion; a Christian indeed values every service of God so much, that though some may be in the eye of the world and of natural reason, a slight empty business, beggerly rudiments foolishness, yet seeing God calls for it, the authority of the comand doth so over awe his heart, that he is willing to spend himself and to be spent in the discharge of it. It is an expression of *Luthers*, ordinary works that are done in faith, and from faith, are more precious than Heaven and earth. And if this be so, and a Christian know it, it is not a little matter that should divert him: but he should answer every avocation and resist every temptation, *Nehemiah* did chap. 6. 3. *Sanballat, Geshem and Tobiah* (when they would have hindred the building of the wal) with this, *I am doing a great work* (saith he) *so that I cannot come down, why should the work of the Lord cease?*

5. *To distracting heart eating cares and fears.* A gracious heart so estimates it's union with Christ and the work that God sets it about, as it will not willingly suffer any thing to come in to choak it, or dead it. A Christian is desirous that the Word of God should take such full possession as to divide between soul and spirit, but he would not suffer the fear and noise of evil tidings to take such impression in his soul, as to make a division and struggling there like the twins in *Rebeckah's* womb. A great man will permit common people to stand without his doors, but he will not let them come in and make a noise in his closet or bed chamber, when he purposely retires himself from all worldly imployments. So a well tempered spirit though it may inquire after things abroad without doors in the world, and suffer some ordinary cares and fears to break in to the suburbs of the soul, so as to have a light touch upon the thoughts: Yet it will not upon any terms admit of an intrusion into the privy chamber, which should be wholly reserved for Jesus Christ as his inward Temple.

6. *To sinking discouragements,* When things fall not out according

cording to expectation, when the tyde of second causes runs so low that we see little left in the outward means to bear up our hopes and hearts. That then the heart begins to reason as he in the *Kings*, *If the Lord should open the Window of Heaven how should this be*? Never considering that God can open the eyes of the Blind with clay and spittle, he can work above, beyond, nay contrary to means; he often makes the faireſt flowers of mans endeavors to wither, and brings improbable things to pass, that the glory of enterprizes may be given to himself. Nay if his people stand in need of miracles to work their deliverance miracles fall as easily out of Gods hands, as to give his people daily bread. Gods blessing is many times secret upon his servants that they know not which way it comes; as 2 *Kings*, 3. 17. *Ye shal not see wind, neither shall ye see rain, yet the valley shall be filled with water.* God would have us depend on him though we do not see means how the thing should be brought to pass, else we do not shew a quiet spirit; though an affliction be upon thee, let not thy heart sink under it. So far as thy heart sinks and thou art discouraged under thy affliction, so much thou wanteſt of this lesson of Contentment.

7. *To sinful shiftings and shirkings out for ease and help.* As we see in *Saul* turning to the witch of Endor, and his offering sacrifice before *Samuel* came: Nay the good King *Jehoshaphat* joyns himself with *Ahaziah* 2 *Chron.* 20. *Vlt. And* Asa *goes to* Benhadad *King of Assyria for help, not relying upon the Lord* (2 *Chr.* 16. 7. 8.) Though the Lord had delivered the Ethiopian Army into his hands, consisting of a thousand thousand, 2 *Chron.* 14. 11. And good *Jacob* joyned in a lye with his mother to *Isaac*, he was not content to stay Gods time, and use Gods meanes, but made too great haſt and stept out of his way, to procure the blessing which God intended for him: as many do through the corruption of their hearts and weakness of their faith, because they are not able to truſt God, and follow him fully in al things alwaies; and for this cause the Lord often follows the Saints with many sore temporal crosses, (as we see in *Jacob*) though they obtain the mercy. It may be thy wretched carnal heart thinks, I care not how I be

delivered

delivered, so I may but get free from it: Is it not so many times in some of your hearts when any cross of affliction befals you? Have you not such kind of workings of spirit as this; Oh that I could but be delivered out of this affliction any way, I would not care; your hearts are far from being quiet. And this sinful shifting is the next thing in opposition to this quietness, which God requires in a contented spirit.

The Eighth and last thing that this quietness of Spirit is opposite to, is *desperate risings of heart against God in a way of rebellion*: That is most abominable. I hope many of you have learned so far to be content, as to keep down your hearts from such distempers; and yet the truth is, not only wicked men, but sometimes the very Saints of God find the beginnings of this, when an affliction lies long, and is very sore and heavy upon them indeed, and strikes them as it were in the master vein; they find somwhat of this in their hearts, arising against God, their thoughts begin to bubble, and their affections begin to stir in rising against God himself; especially such as together with their coruptions have much melancholly, and the Devil working both upon the corruptions of their hearts, and the melancholly distemper of their bodies; though there may lie much grace at the bottom, yet there may be some risings against God himself under affliction. Now Christian quietness is opposite to all these things: that is, When afflictions come, be it what affliction it will be, yet you do not murmur, though you be sensible, though you make your moan, though you desire to be delivered, and seek it by all good means, yet you do not murmur nor repine, you do not fret nor vex, there is not that tumultuousness of spirit in you, there is not unsetledness in your spirits, there are not distracting fears in your hearts, no sinking discouragements, no base shiftings, no risings in rebellion any way against God: This is the quietness of Spirit under an affliction; and that is the second thing when the soul is so far able to bear an affliction as to keep quiet under it.

Now the Third thing I would open in the description is this, *It is an inward quiet, gracious* [*frame*] *of Spirit.* It is a frame of Spirit, and then a gracious frame of Spirit. Contentment it is a Soul business, First, It is inward; Secondly

quiet; Thirdly it is a quiet *Frame* of Spirit. [*Frame*] by that I mean these Three things: There are Three things considerable when I say, Contentment consists in the quiet *frame* of the Spirit of a man.

First, *That it is a grace that spreads it self through the whol Soul*: as thus, It is in the judgment, that is, The judgment of the soul of a man or woman tends to quiet the heart; In my judgment I am satisfied, that is one thing to be satisfied in ones understanding and judgment, as thus, This is the hand of God; and this is that that is sutable to my condition, or best for me; although I do not see the reason of the thing, yet I am satisfied in my judgment about it.

And then, *It is in the thoughts of a man or woman*: As my judgment is satisfied so my thoughts are kept in order.

And then it comes to the *will*, *My will yeilds and submits to it, my affections are all likewise kept in order, so that it goes through the whol soul.* There is in some a partial Contentment, and so 'tis not the frame of the soul, but some part of the soul hath some Contentment; as thus many a man may be satisfied in his judgment about a thing, and yet cannot for his life rule his affections, nor his thoughts, cannot rule his thoughts, nor the will, nor the affections though the judgment be satisfied: I make no question but many of you may know this by your own experience, if you do but observe the workings of your own hearts. Cannnot you say when such an affliction befals you, I can bless God I am satisfied in my judgment about it, I have nothing in the world to say in respect of my judgment against it, I see the hand of God and I should be content, yea I am satisfied in my judgment, that my condition is a good condition in which I am; but I cannot for my life rule my thoughts, my will, and my affections, methinks I feel my heart heavy, and sad, and troubled more than it should be, and yet my judgment is satisfied. This seem'd to be the case of *David*, *Psal.* 42. *Oh my Soul why art thou disquieted?* *David* as far as his judgment went, there was a contentedness, that is, His judgment was satisfied in the work of God upon him; and he was troubled, but he knew not wherfore, *O my soul why art thou thus cast down within me?* That Psalm is a very good Psalm for those that feel a fretting, discon-

tented

tended distemper in their hearts at any time, for them to be reading or singing: he hath it once or twice in that *Psalm, Why art thou cast down O my soul?* In vers. 5. *And why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God for I shall yet praise him, for the help of his countenance.* *David* had enough to quiet him, and that that he had, had prevailed with his judgment, but after it had prevailed with his judgment, he could not get it further. He could not get this grace of Contentment to go through the whol frame of the Soul. There is a great deal of stir sometimes to get Contentment into their judgments, that is, To satisfie their judgments about their condition: Come to many, that the hand of God is upon perhaps in a grievous manner. and seek to satisfie them, and tel them that there is no such cause to be disquieted, O not such cause saith the troubled spirit, O then there is no cause that any should be disquieted; there was never any such affliction as I have! and a hundred things they have to put off what is said to them, so as you cannot so much as get into their judgments to satisfie them; but there is a great deal of hope of Contentment if once your judgments come to be satisfied, that you can sit down and say in your judgments, I see cause to be contented; but though you have gotten thus far, yet you may have much to do with your hearts afterward: for there is such unrulines in our thoughts and affections, that our judgments are not able alwaies to rule our thoughts and affections, and that makes me to say, That Contentment is an inward, quiet, gracious frame of Spirit, that is, the whol Soul Judgment, Thoughts, Will, Affections and all are satisfied and quiet. I suppose in the very opening this, you begin to see it is a lesson that you had need learn, and it is not a thing soon got, if Contentment be such a thing as this is.

The Second thing is this, which is very observable, *That spiritual contentment comes from the frame of the Soul.* A man or woman that is contented in a right way, their Contentment doth not so much come from outward arguments, or any outward thing that helps them to be content, as it doth from the disposition of their own hearts; It is the disposition of their own hearts that causes this Contentment; that brings forth this gracious Contentment rather than any external thing that

doth it; as thus I would open my self, one that is disquieted, suppose a child, or man, or woman if you come and bring them some great matter to please them, that perhaps wil quiet them, and they will be contented; it is the thing you bring them that quiets them, but it is not the disposition of their own spirits, not from any good temper that there is in their own hearts: but from some external thing that is brought them: but when a Christian is contented in a right way, the quiet doth come more from the inward temper and disposition of their own hearts than from any external arguments, or possession of any thing in the world. I would yet open this further to you in this Similitude. The being content upon some external thing, it is like the warming of a mans cloaths by the fire; but being content by the inward disposition of the soul, it is like the warmth that a mans cloaths hath from the natural heat of his body: A man that is of a healthful body, he puts on his cloaths, and perhaps when he puts them on at the first in a cold morning he feels his cloaths cold, but after he hath them on a little while, they are warm; why how come they warm? they come not nigh the fire: No, but it came from the natural heat of his body. Now a sickly man that hath his natural heat decayed, if he put on his cloaths cold, they will not be hot in a long time, but he must have them warmed by the fire, and then they will quickly be cold again; So this wil difference the Contenments of men. There are some men now that are very gracious, and when an affliction comes upon them, indeed at first it seems to be a little cold, but after it hath been on a while, the very temper of their hearts being gracious, it makes their afflictions easie, and makes them to be quiet under it, and not to complain of any discontentment. But now you shall have others that have an affliction upon them, that have not this good temper in their hearts, their afflictions are very cold upon them, and grievous; and it may be if you bring them some external arguments, somwhat from without, as the fire that warms the cloaths, perhaps they will be quiet for a while: but alas, wanting a gracious disposition within, in their own hearts, that warmth wil not hold long. The warmth of the fire, that is, a Contentment that comes meerly from external arguments will not hold long,

long, but that holds that doth come from the gracious temper of the Spirit. It is from the frame and the disposition of the spirit of a man or woman. There's the true Contentment. But this we shall speak to further in the opening of the *Mystery of Contentment.*

The Third thing is this, *It is the frame of Spirit that shews the habitualness of this grace of Contentment,* Contentment is not meerly one act, a flash in a good mood; you shal have many men and women, that take them in some good mood and they will be very quiet; but this will not hold, this is not a constant way, there is not a constant tenour of their spirits to be holy and gracious under affliction: But I say, It is the quiet frame of spirit, by that I mean, The habitual disposition of their Souls, that it is not only at this time, and the other time when you take men and women in a good mood: but it is the constant tenour and temper of the heart; that is a Christian that hath learned this lesson of Contentment, that in the constant tenour and temper of heart is contented, and can carry its self quietly in a constant way, or else it is worth nothing; for there is no body that is so furious in their discontent, but will be quiet in some good mood or other. Now First it is a heart-business; Secondly, it is the heart quiet; and then Thirdly, it is the frame of the heart.

But Fourthly, *It is the* [*gracious*] *frame of the heart.* Indeed in Contentment there is a composition of all graces if the Contentment be Spiritual, if it be truly Christian, there is I say a composition of all Spiritual graces; As it is in some Oyls, there is a composition of a great many very precious Ingredients: so in this grace of Contentment, which we shall yet further speak of in the opening of the Excellency of it. But now the gracious frame of Spirit is in opposition to Three things?

1. First, *In opposition to the naturall stilness that there is in many men and women.* There are some of such a natural constitution that makes them to be more still and more quiet than others: others are of a violent and hot constitution, and they are more impatient than others.

2. Secondly, *In opposition to a sturdy resolution.* As some men through the strength of some sturdy resolution, they have not

seemed

seemed to be troubled, let come what will come: and so it may be through a sturdy resolution at some times they are not so much disquieted as others are.

Thirdly, *In way of distinction, from the very strength of reason* (though not sanctified) *the strength of natural reason may quiet the heart in some measure.* But now I say A gracious frame of spirit is not a meer stilness of body through a natural constitution & temper, nor sturdiness of resolution, nor meerly through the strength of reason.

You will say, wherein is this graciousness of Contentment distinguisht from all these? More of this will be spoken to when we shew the mystery of it, and the lessons that are learned, but now we may speak a little by way of distinction here; as now From the natural stilness of mens spirits, many men and women have such a natural stilness of spirit and constitution of body, that you shall find them seldom disquieted. But now mark these kind of people that are so, they likewise are very dull, of a dul spirit in any good thing, they have no quickness, nor livelines of spirit in that which is good; but now mark where Contentment of heart is gracious, the heart is very quick and lively in the service of God, yea the more any gracious heart can bring its self to be in a contented disposition Oh the more fit it is for any service of God, and is very active and lively in Gods service, not dul in the service of God: And as a Contented heart is very active and stirring in the work of God, so he is very active and stirring in sanctifying Gods Name in the affliction that doth befall him: The difference will appear very cleer thus, One that is of a still disposition, he is not disquieted indeed as others, neither hath he any activeness of spirit in sanctifying the Name of God in the affliction: but now one that is content in a gracious way as he is not disquieted, but keeps his heart quiet in respect to vexing and trouble, so in the other side he is not dull nor heavy but is very active to sanctifie Gods Name in the affliction that is upon him, for it is not enough meerly not to murmur, not to be discontented and troubled, but you must be active in the sanctifying Gods Name in the affliction. And indeed this will distinguish it from the other, from a sturdy resolution, I will

will not be troubled: but though you have a ſturdy reſolution that you will not be troubled, is there a conſcionableneſs in you to ſanctifie Gods name in your affliction, and doth it come from thence? That is the main thing that brings the quiet of heart, and helps againſt diſcontentedneſs in a gracious heart. I ſay the deſire and care that thy ſoul hath to ſanctifie Gods Name in an affliction, it is that that quiets the ſoul, which doth not in the other. Neither when it is meerly from reaſon: As *Socrates* it is ſaid of him (though he were but an Heathen) that whatever befel him he would never ſo much as change his countenance, and he got this power over his ſpirit meerly by ſtrength of reaſon and morality: but now this gracious Contentment comes from principles beyond the ſtrength of reaſon. I cannot open that (from whence it comes) til we come to open the Myſtery of ſpiritual Contentment. I will only give you this one note of difference between a man and a woman that is contented in a natural way, and another that is contented in a ſpiritual way. Thoſe that are contented in a natural way, they overcome themſelves when outward afflictions do befal them, they are contented, yea and they are contented as well when they commit ſin againſt God, either when they have outward croſſes or when God is diſhonored it is all one, either when themſelves are croſt or when God is croſt; but now a gracious heart that is contented with its own affliction, yet mightily riſes when God is diſhonored.

The Fift is [*Freely*] *freely ſubmitting to, and taking complacency in Gods diſpoſe*, it is a free work of the ſpirit: now there are four things to be opened in this freedom of ſpirit.

Firſt, That the heart is readily brought over, that which one doth freely there is no great ſtir to bring them to it; there are many men and women when their afflictions are grievous upon them, with much a do they are brought to be contented, a great deal of ſtir there is to quiet their hearts when they are under affliction, yet at laſt perhaps they are brought to it, I but now this doth not come off freely: if I deſire a thing of another and I get it perhaps with much ado, and a great deal of ſtir there is, but here's no freedom of ſpirit; but when a man is free in a thing, do but mention it and preſently he comes off to

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it. So if you have learned this art of Contentment, you wil not only be contented after a great deal of do to quiet your hearts, but readily as soon as ever you do come to think that it is the hand of God, your heart presently closeth.

Secondly, *freely, That is not by constraint,* not patience by force (as we use to say.) As many will say that you must be content, this is the hand of God and there is no help for it; O! this is too low an expression for Christians, yet when Christians come to visit one another, they say Friend or Neighbor you must be content, this is too low an expression for a Christian, *Must be content,* No, readily, and freely I will be content. It is futable to my heart to yeild to God, and to be content, I find it is a thing that comes off of it self, that my soul will be content. Oh you should answer your friends so, that come and tel you you must be content, nay I am willing to yeild to God, and I am freely content, that's the Second. And then a free act it comes after a rational way, that's freedoom, that is, it doth not come through ignorance, because I know no better condition, or that I know not what my affliction is, but it comes through a sanctified judgment, for that is the reason that no Creature can do an act of freedom, but the rational creature, the liberty of action is only in rational creatures, and it comes from hence, for that's only freedom and out of liberty that's wrought in a rational way, as a natural freedom is when I by my judgment see what is to be done, understand the thing, and then there is a closing with what I do understand in my judgment, that is freely done; but now if a man doth a thing and understands not what he doth, he cannot be said to do it freely. So if men are contented, but it is because they understand not what their affliction is, or because they understand no better, this is not freely: as for instance, Suppose a Child born in a Prison and never in all his life went out, the Child is contented, Why? Because he never knew better, but this is no free act of Contentation. But now for men and women that do know better, that know that the condition in which they are in, it is an afflicted condition, and a sad condition, and yet they can bring their hearts to a Contentation out of a sanctified judgment, this is freedom.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, *This freedom it is in oppoſition to ſtupidneſs*, for a man and woman may be contented meerly out of want of ſence, this is not free, as a man in a dead palſey that doth not feel you nip his fleſh, he is not freely patient; but if one ſhould have his fleſh nipt, and feel it, and yet for all that can be able to bridle himſelf, and do it freely, that is another matter. So it is here, many are contented meerly out of ſtupidneſs, they have a dead palſie upon them; but now a gracious heart hath ſenſe enough, and yet is contented, and therefore is free.

Sixthly, *Freely* [*ſubmitting*] *to, and taking complacency in Gods diſpoſe.* Submitting to Gods diſpoſe, What is that? The word *Submit*, it ſignifies nothing elſe, but to ſend under; as thus, One that is diſcontented, the heart will be unruly, and would even get above God ſo far as diſcontentment prevails; but now comes the grace of Contentment and ſends it under; to ſubmit, it is to ſend under a thing; now when the ſoul comes to ſee the unrulineſs that there is in it, here's the hand of God that brings an affliction, and my heart is troubled and diſcontented; what ſaith the Soul? Wilt thou be above God? Is it not Gods hand, and muſt thy will be regarded more then Gods? O under, under O thou ſoul get under, keep under, keep low, keep under Gods feet; thou art under Gods feet, and keep under his feet, keep under the Authority of God, the Majeſtie of God, the Soveraignty of God, the Power that God hath over thee: Keep under, that is to ſubmit; then the Soul can ſubmit to God when it can ſend it ſelf under the Power and Authority, and Soveraignty, and Dominion that God hath over it; that is the Sixth Particular: Yea but that is not enough, yet you have not got to this Grace of Contentment, except in the next place you take,

Seventhly, *Taking a* [*complacency*] *in Gods diſpoſe.* That is thus, I am well pleaſed in what God doth, ſo far as *I* can ſee God in it, though as (I ſaid) I may be ſenſible of the affliction, and may deſire that God in his due time would take it off; and uſe means to take it off; yet I may be well pleaſed ſo far as Gods hand is in it. To be well pleaſed with Gods hand, that is a higher degree than the other: and this comes from hence, not only becauſe I ſee that *I* ſhould be content in this affliction, but

becauſe I ſee that there is good in this affliction. I find there is honey in this rock, and ſo I do not only ſay, *I muſt*, or *I will* ſubmit to Gods hand: no, but the hand of God is *good*; it is *good that I am afflicted.* That it is juſt that I am afflicted, that may be in one that is not truly contented, I may be convinced that God deals juſtly in this, God is righteous and juſt, and 'tis fit I ſhould ſubmit to what he hath done, O the Lord hath done righteouſly in all his waies: but that is not enough, but thou muſt ſay Good is the hand of the Lord, the expreſſion of old *Ely*, *Good is the Word of the Lord*, when it was a ſore and hard word, that word that did threaten very grievous things to *Ely* and his houſe, and yet, Good is the word of the Lord, ſaith *Ely*. Perhaps ſome of you may ſay as *David*, It is good that I was afflicted; nay, you muſt come to ſay thus *It is good that I am afflicted.* Not good when you ſee the good fruit that it hath wrought, but when you are afflicted to ſay, It is good that I am afflicted. Whatever the affliction be, yet through the mercy of God my condition is a good condition; it is the top indeed, and the height of this art of Contentment to come to this pitch, to be able to ſay, Well, my condition and and afflictions are thus and thus, and is very grievous and ſore, yet I am through Gods mercy in a good condition, and the hand of God is good upon me notwithſtanding. Now I ſhould have given you divers Scriptures about this, I ſhall but give you one or two that are very remarkable; you wil think this is a hard leſſon to come thus far, not only to be quiet, but to have a complacency in affliction. *Prov.* 16. 6. *In the houſe of the righteous is much treaſure, but in the revenues of the wicked is trouble.* Here's a Scripture now that will ſhew that a gracious heart hath cauſe to ſay, it is in a good condition whatever it be. In the houſe of the Righteous is much Treaſure, his houſe, what houſe? it may be a poor Cottage, perhaps he hath ſcarce a ſtool to ſit on; perhaps he is fain to ſit upon a ſtump of wood, a piece of a block inſtead of a ſtool; or perhaps he hath ſcarce a bed to lie upon, or a diſh to eat in; yet ſaith the holy Ghoſt, In the houſe of the righteous is much treaſure: Let the righteous man be the pooreſt man in the world: It may be there are ſome that have come and taken all the goods out of his houſe for debt; perhaps his houſe is plundered and

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all is gone, yet ſtill, *In the houſe of the righteous is much treaſure*; the righteous man can never be brought to be ſo poor, to have his houſe rifled and ſpoild, but there will remain much treaſure within, if he hath but a diſh or a ſpoon or any thing in the world in his houſe, there will be much treaſure; ſo long as he is there, there is the preſence of God and the bleſſing of God upon him, and therein is much treaſure: but in the revenues of the wicked there is trouble: There is more treaſure in the pooreſt bodies houſe, If he be Godly, than in the houſe of the greateſt man in the world, that hath his brave hangings, and brave wrought beds, and chairs, and couches, and cupbords of plate, and the like; what ever he hath, he hath not ſo much treaſure in it, as in the houſe of the pooreſt righteous ſoul; therefore in a verſe or two after my text, no marvail though *Paul* (ſaith he) was Content, you ſhall ſee in *Phil.* 4. 18. *But I have all, and abound, I am full.* I have all: Alas poor man what had *Paul* that could make him ſay he had all, where was there ever man more afflicted than *Paul* was? many times he had not tatters to hang about his body, to cover his nakedneſs, he had not bread to eat, he was often in nakedneſs, and put in the ſtocks, and whipt and cruelly uſed, *yet I have all* (ſaith *Paul*) for all that. Yea you ſhall have it in 2 *Cor.* 6. 10. He profeſſes there, *That he did poſſeſs all things, as ſorrowful, yet alwaies rejoycing, as poor, yet making many rich, as having nothing, and yet poſſeſſing all things*, but marke what he ſaith, it is, *As having nothing*, but it is *Poſſeſſing all things*. He doth not ſay, as poſſeſſing all things, but poſſeſſing all things; it is very little I have in the world, but yet poſſeſſing all things: So that you ſee a Chriſtian hath cauſe to take complacency in Gods hand, whatſoever his hand be.

The Eight thing in Contentment it is [*In Gods diſpoſe*] *Submitting to and taking complacency in Gods diſpoſe.* That is, the ſoul that hath learned this leſſon of Contentment, looks up to God in all things; looks not down to the inſtruments or the means, as ſuch a man did it, and it was unreaſonableneſs of ſuch and ſuch inſtruments, and the like barbarous uſage of ſuch and ſuch; but looks up to God; a contented heart looks to Gods diſpoſe, and ſubmits to Gods diſpoſe, that is, ſees the wiſdom of

because I see that there is good in this affliction. I find there is honey in this rock, and so I do not only say, *I must*, or *I will* submit to Gods hand: no, but the hand of God is *good*; it is *good that I am afflicted.* That it is just that I am afflicted, that may be in one that is not truly contented, I may be convinced that God deals justly in this, God is righteous and just, and 'tis fit I should submit to what he hath done, O the Lord hath done righteously in all his waies: but that is not enough, but thou must say Good is the hand of the Lord, the expression of old *Ely*, *Good is the Word of the Lord*, when it was a sore and hard word, that word that did threaten very grievous things to *Ely* and his house, and yet, Good is the word of the Lord, saith *Ely*. Perhaps some of you may say as *David*, It is good that I was afflicted; nay, you must come to say thus *It is good that I am afflicted.* Not good when you see the good fruit that it hath wrought, but when you are afflicted to say, It is good that I am afflicted. Whatever the affliction be, yet through the mercy of God my condition is a good condition; it is the top indeed, and the height of this art of Contentment to come to this pitch, to be able to say, Well, my condition and and afflictions are thus and thus, and is very grievous and sore, yet I am through Gods mercy in a good condition, and the hand of God is good upon me notwithstanding. Now I should have given you divers Scriptures about this, I shall but give you one or two that are very remarkable; you wil think this is a hard lesson to come thus far, not only to be quiet, but to have a complacency in affliction. *Prov.* 16. 6. *In the house of the righteous is much treasure, but in the revenues of the wicked is trouble.* Here's a Scripture now that will shew that a gracious heart hath cause to say, it is in a good condition whatever it be. In the house of the Righteous is much Treasure, his house, what house? it may be a poor Cottage, perhaps he hath scarce a stool to sit on; perhaps he is fain to sit upon a stump of wood, a piece of a block instead of a stool; or perhaps he hath scarce a bed to lie upon, or a dish to eat in; yet saith the holy Ghost, In the house of the righteous is much treasure: Let the righteous man be the poorest man in the world: It may be there are some that have come and taken all the goods out of his house for debt; perhaps his house is plundered and all

all is gone, yet still, *In the house of the righteous is much treasure*; the righteous man can never be brought to be so poor, to have his house rifled and spoild, but there will remain much treasure within, if he hath but a dish or a spoon or any thing in the world in his house, there will be much treasure; so long as he is there, there is the presence of God and the blessing of God upon him, and therein is much treasure: but in the revenues of the wicked there is trouble: There is more treasure in the poorest bodies house, If he be Godly, than in the house of the greatest man in the world, that hath his brave hangings, and brave wrought beds, and chairs, and couches, and cupbords of plate, and the like; what ever he hath, he hath not so much treasure in it, as in the house of the poorest righteous soul; therefore in a verse or two after my text, no marvail though *Paul* (saith he) was Content, you shall see in *Phil.* 4. 18. *But I have all, and abound, I am full.* I have all: Alas poor man what had *Paul* that could make him say he had all, where was there ever man more afflicted than *Paul* was? many times he had not tatters to hang about his body, to cover his nakedness, he had not bread to eat, he was often in nakedness, and put in the stocks, and whipt and cruelly used, *yet I have all* (saith *Paul*) for all that. Yea you shall have it in 2 *Cor.* 6. 10. He professes there, *That he did possess all things, as sorrowful, yet alwaies rejoycing, as poor, yet making many rich, as having nothing, and yet possessing all things*, but marke what he saith, it is, *As having nothing*, but it is *Possessing all things*. He doth not say, as possessing all things, but possessing all things; it is very little I have in the world, but yet possessing all things: So that you see a Christian hath cause to take complacency in Gods hand, whatsoever his hand be.

The Eight thing in Contentment it is [*In Gods dispose*] *Submitting to and taking complacency in Gods dispose.* That is, the soul that hath learned this lesson of Contentment, looks up to God in all things; looks not down to the instruments or the means, as such a man did it, and it was unreasonableness of such and such instruments, and the like barbarous usage of such and such; but looks up to God; a contented heart looks to Gods dispose, and submits to Gods dispose, that is, sees the wisdom of

God in all, in his ſubmiſſion ſees his ſoveraignty, but that that makes him take complacency, it is Gods wiſdom; the Lord knows how to order things better than I, the Lord ſees further than I do, I ſee things but at preſent, but the Lord ſees a great while hence, and how do I know but had it not been for this affliction, I had been undone? I know that the love of God *may as well ſtand with an afflicted eſtate, as with a proſperous eſtate*; and ſuch kind of reaſonings there are in a contented ſpirit, ſubmitting unto the diſpoſe of God.

The laſt thing is, *This is in* [*every condition,*] It may be in ſome things you could be content. You ſhall have many will ſay, if my affliction were but as the affliction of ſuch a one I could be content, yea but it muſt be in the preſent affliction that is upon you. We uſe to ſay, There is a great deal of deceit in Univerſals; in the general, come to any man or woma nand ſay, Will not you be content with Gods diſpoſe? Yes ſay they God forbid but we ſhould ſubmit to Gods hand what ever it be; you ſay thus in the general, it is an eaſie matter to learn this leſſon, but when it comes to the particnlar, when the croſs comes ſore indeed, when it ſtrikes you in the heavieſt croſs that you think could befal you, what ſaith your heart now? Can you in every condition be content not only for the matter, but for the time, that is to be in ſuch a condition ſo long as God would have you, to be content to be at Gods time in that condition, to have ſuch an affliction ſo long as God would have the affliction abide upon you, to be willing to ſtay and not to come out of the affliction no ſooner than the Lord would have you come out of it? you are not content in your condition elſe; to be content meerly that I have ſuch a hand of God upon me, and not to ſtay under the hand of God, that is not to be content under every condition, but when I can find my heart ſubmitting to Gods diſpoſe in ſuch particular afflictions that are very hard, and very grievous, and yet my heart is quiet, here is one that hath learned the leſſon of Contentment: Contentment, it is the inward, quiet, gracious frame of ſpirit, freely ſubmitting to and taking complacency in Gods diſpoſe in every condition: That is the deſcription. Now in this there hath been Nine ſeveral things opened.

1 Firſt,

1. First, That Contentment is a heart work within the soul. 2. Secondly, It is the quieting of the heart. 3. Thirdly, It is the frame of the spirit. 4. Fourthly, It is a gracious frame, 5. Fifthly, It is the free working of this gracious frame. 6. Sixtly, There is in it a submission to God, sending the soul under God. 7. Seventhly, There is a taking complacency in the hand of God, 8. Eighthly, All to Gods dispose. 9. Ninthly, In every condition, every condition though never so hard, thought continue never so long: Now those of you that have learned to be Content, have learned to attain unto these severall things; the very opening of these things I hope may so far work upon your hearts as, First, That you may lay your hands upon your hearts upon this that hath been said, the very telling of you what the lesson is, I say may cause you to lay your hands upon your hearts, and say, Lord I see there is more in Christian Contentation than I thought there was, and I have been far from learning this lesson, I indeed have learned but my A B C in this lesson of Contentment, I am but in the lower forme in Christs school if I am in it at all; but these we shall speak to more afterward; but the special thing I aim'd at in the opening of this point, is to shew how great a *Mistery* there is in Christian Contentment; and how many several lessons are to be learned, that we may come to attain to this Heavenly disposition, that Saint *Paul* did attain to.

SER.

SERMON II. *at* Stepney. Aug. 3. 1645.

PHIL. 4. 11.

For I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.

WEE have made entrance (you may remember) into the Argument of *Christian Contentment.* And have opened the words, and shewed you what this Christian Contentation is; that is, the inward, quiet, gracious frame of Spirit, freely submitting to, and taking Complacency in Gods dispose in every condition. And therein came to this last t[illegible] [*In every condition*] Now we shall a little inlarge that, and so proceed.

1 *Submitting to God in what ever Affliction befalls us: for the kind.*

2 *For the time and continuance of the affliction.*

3 *For the variety and changes of Affliction*: Let them be what they will, yet there must be a submitting to Gods dispose in every condition.

First for the kind, Many men and women will in the generall say, that they must submit to God in affliction; I suppose now if you should come from one end of this Congregation to another, and speak to every soul thus; Would not you submit to Gods dispose, in whatever condition he should dispose of you to; you will say, God forbid it should be otherwise, but we use to say, *There is a great deal of deceit in generals.* In general you would submit to any thing: but what if it be in this and that particulaar that is most cross to you. Then any thing but that: we are usually apt to think that any condition is better than

than the condition that God doth disposse us to, now here is not Contentment it should not be only to any condition in general, but for the kind of affliction, if it be that which is most cross to you. God (it may be) strikes you in your Child, Oh if it had been in my Estate saith one, I should be content; perhaps he strikes you in your Match, Oh saith he I had rather have been strucken in my health; and if he had struck you in your health, Oh then if it had been in my trading I would not have cared; but we must not be our own carvers, what particular afflictions God shal dispose us to, there must be Contentment in them.

Secondly, *There must be a submission to God in every affliction, for the time and continuance of the affliction.* It may be saith one I could submit and be content, but this affliction hath been upon me a long time, a quarter of a year, a year, divers years, and I know not how to yeild and submit to it, my patience is even worn and broke: yea it may it is a spiritual affliction. You could submit to God you say in any outward affliction, but not in a soul affliction, or if it were an affliction upon the soul, trouble upon the heart, if it were the withdrawing of Gods face, yet if this had been but for a little time I could submit; but seeking of God so long a time and yet God doth not appear, Oh how shal I bear this! We must not be our own disposers for the *time* of deliverance no more than the *kind* and *way* of deliverance, and I wil give you a Scripture or two about this; That we are to submit unto God for the time as wel as the kind, in the latter end of the 1. Chap. of *Ezek. When I saw it I fell upon my face, and I heard a voice of one that spake,* (the Prophet was cast down upon his face, but how long must he lie upon his face) *And he said unto me, Son of man stand upon thy feet and I will speak unto thee, and the spirit entred into me, when he spake unto me and set me upon my feet.* *Ezekiel* was cast down upon his face, and there he must lie til God bid him stand up, yea and not only so, but till Gods Spirit came into him to enable him to stand up: So when God casts us down, we must be content to lie till God bid us stand up, and Gods Spirit enter into us to enable us to stand up, So you know *Noah* he was put into the Ark, certainly he knew there was much affliction in the Ark, having all

kind

kind of creatures shut up with him for twelve months together, it was a mighty thing, yet God shutting him up (though the waters were asswaged) *Noah* was not to come out of the Ark til God bid him: So though we be shut up in great afflictions, and we may think there may be this & that and the other means to come out of that affliction, yet til God doth open the door we should be willing to stay; God hath put us in, and God is to bring us out: As we read in the *Acts*, of *Paul*, when they had shut him in Prison and would have sent him out: Nay, saith *Paul*, they shut us in, let them come and fetch us out: So in a holy gracious way should a soul say, Wel, this affliction that I am brought into, it is by the hand of God, and I am content to be here till God brings me out himself. God doth require at our hands, that we should not be willing to come out till he comes and fetches us out. In *Josh.* 4. 10. you have a notable history there that may very well serve our purpose; we read of the Priests, that the Priests bear the Ark and stood in the midst of Jordan: you know when the children of Israel went into the Land of Canaan they went through the River of Jordan: Now the going through the river Jordan was a very dangerous thing, only God bad them to go, they might have been afraid that the water might have come in upon them: but mark, it is said, *The Priests that bear the Ark stood in the midst of Jordan til every thing was finished that the Lord commanded* Joshua *to speak unto the People, according to al that* Moses *commanded* Joshua *and the People hasted and passed over: and it came to pass when all the people were clean passed over, that the Ark of the Lord passed over, and the Priests in the presence of the people.* Now it was Gods dispose that all the people should pass over first, that they should be safe upon the land; but the Priests they must stand stil til all the people be passed over, and then they must have leave to go, but they must stay till God would have them go, stay in all that danger, for certainly in reason and sense there was a great deal of dadger in staying: for the text saith, the people hasted over, but the Priests they must stay til the people be gone, stay til God cals them out from that place of danger; and so many times it doth prove that God is pleased to dispose of things so that the Ministers must stay longer in danger than the people

ple, and Magistrates and those in publick place, which should make people to be satisfied and contented with a lower condition that God hath put them into: Though your condition be low, yet you are not in that danger that those are in that are in a higher condition; God cals them in publick place to stand longer in the gap and place of danger than other people, but we must be content to stay even in Jordan til the Lord shal be pleased to cal us out.

And then for the variety of our condition, we must be content with the particular affliction, and the times and all the circumstances about the affliction; for sometimes the circumstances are greater afflictions than the afflictions themselves; And for the variety, if God will exercise us with various afflictions one after another: As that hath been very observable even of late, that many that have been plundered, and come away, afterwards have fallen sick and died: They have fled for their lives and afterwards the plague hath come among them, and if not that affliction it may be some other affliction. It is very rare that one affliction comes alone, commonly afflictions are not single things, but they come one upon the neck of another: It may be God strikes one in his estate, then in his body, then in his name, wife, or child, or dear friend, and so it comes in a various way: it is the way of God ordinarily (you may find it by experience) that seldom one affliction comes alone, now this is hard when one affliction follows after another, when there is a variety of afflictions, when there is a mighty change in a condition, up and down, this way, and that way; there indeed is the tryal of a Christian; there must be submission to Gods dispose in them. I remember it is said even of *Cato* that was a Heathen, that no man saw him to be changed, though he lived in a time when the Common-wealth was so often changed, yet it is said of him, he was the same though his condition was changed, and he ran through variety of conditions. Oh that it could be said so of many Christians, that though their conditions be changed, yet that no body could see *them* changed, they are the same. Look what gracious sweet, and holy temper they were in before, that they are still: Thus we are to submit to the dispose of God in every condition.

Obj. But you will say, This that you speak of is good in-

deed if we could attain to it, but is it possible for one to attain to this?

Answer, It is if you get skill in the Art of it, you may attain to it, and it will prove to be no such difficult thing to you neither, if you understand but the mystery of it; as there's many things that men do in their callings, that if a country man comes and sees, he thinks it is a mighty hard thing, and that he should never be able to do it, but that's because he understands not the art of it, there is a turning of the hand so as you may do it with ease. Now that's the business of this exercise, to open unto you the art and mystery of Contentment: What way a Christian comes to Contentment, there is a great Mystery and art in it, by that that hath been opened to you there will appear some mystery and art, as that a man should be content with his affliction and yet throughly sensible of his affliction too, to be throughly sensible of an affliction, and to endeavor the removing of it by all lawfull means, and yet to be content, there's a mystery in that, how to Joyn these two together to be sensible of an affliction as much as that man or woman that is not content, I am sensible of it as fully as they, and I seek waies to be delivered from it as well as they, and yet still my heart abides content, this is I say a mystery that is very hard to be understood by a carnal heart; but grace doth teach such a mixture doth teach us how to make a mixture of sorrow and a mixture of joy together; and that makes Contentment, the mingling of joy and sorrow, of gracious joy and gracious sorrow together, grace teaches us how to moderate and to order an affliction so as there shall be a sense of it, and yet for all that Contentment under it.

There are divers things further for the opening of the Mystery of Contentment.

The First Thing therefore is this, *To shew that there is a great mystery in it.* One that is contented in a Christian way it may be said of him that he is the most *contented* man in the world, and yet the most *unsatisfied* man in the world, these two together must needs be mysterious, I say a contented man as he is the most contented so he is the most unsatisfied of any man in the world. You never learned the mystery of contentment except

cept it may be said of you that as you are the most contented man so you are the most unsatisfied man in the world.

You will say, how is that? A man that hath learned the art of Contentment is the most contented with any low condition that he hath in the world, and yet he cannot be satisfied with the injoyment of all the world, and yet he is contented if he hath but a crust, but bread and water, that is if God disposes of him for the things of the world, to have but bread and water for his present condition, he can be satisfied with Gods dispose in that; yet if God should give unto him Kingdomes and Empires, all the world to rule, if he should give it him for his portion, he would not be satisfied with that, here's the mystery of it, though his heart be so inlarged as the injoyment of all the world and ten thousand worlds cannot satisfie him for his portion; yet he hath a heart quieted under Gods dispose, if he gives him but bread and water, to joyn these two together this must needs be a great art and mystery. Though he be contented with God in a little, yet those things that would content other men, wil not content him; The men of the world they seek after estates, and think if they had thus much, and thus much, they would be content, they aim at no great matters; but if I had (perhaps some man thinks) but two or three hundred a year, then I should be well enough; If I had but a hundred a yeer, or a thousand a yeare (saith another) then I should be satisfied: but saith a gracious heart, If he had ten hundred thousand times so much a yeare, it would not satisfie him, if he had the quintessence of all the excellencies of all the creatures in the world, it could not satisfie him, yet this man can sing, and be merry, and joyful when he hath but a crust of bread and a little water in the world: Surely Religion is a great Mystery, great is the Mystery of Godliness, not only in the Doctrinal part of it, but in the Practical part of it also. Godliness teacheth us this Mystery, Not to be satisfied with all the world for our portion, and yet to be content with the meanest condition in which we are. As *Luther*, when he had great gifts sent him from Dukes and Princes, he refused it, and saith he, I did vehemently protest God should not put me off so; 'tis not that which will content me. A little in the world will content a Christian for his pas-

ſage: Mark, here lies the Myſtery of it, A little in the world will Content a Chriſtian for his paſſage, but all the world and ten thouſand times more, will not Content a Chriſtian for his *portion*: Now a carnal heart will be Content with theſe things of the world for his portion; and there is the difference between a Carnal heart and a Gracious heart: But ſaith a gracious heart, Lord do with me what thou wilt for my paſſage through this world, I will be content with that, but I cannot be content with all the world for my portion; ſo there is the myſtery of true Contentation. A contented man though he be moſt contented with the leaſt things in the world; yet he is the moſt unſatisfied man that lives in the world. That Soul that is capable of God, can be filled with nothing elſe but God; nothing but God can fill a ſoul that is capable of God: though a gracious heart knows that it is capable of God, and was made for God; Carnal hearts think of no reference to God but a gracious heart being inlarged to be capable of God, and injoying ſomewhat of him, nothing in the world can fill a gracious heart, it muſt be only God himſelf; and therefore you ſhall obſerve, That let God give what he will to a gracious heart, a heart that is godly, except he gives Himſelf, it will not do; a godly heart will not only have the mercy, but the God of that mercy, as well as its ſelf, and then a little matter is enough in the world, ſo be it he hath the God of that mercy he doth injoy; In *Phil.* 4. 7. 9. I ſhall need go no further to ſhew a notable Scripture for this, Compare verſ. 7. with verſ. 9. *And the peace of God which paſſeth all underſtanding ſhall keep your hearts and minds through Jeſus Chriſt.* The peace of God ſhall keep your heart. Then in verſ. 9. *Thoſe things which you have both learned and received, and heard, and ſeen in me, do; and the God of peace ſhal be with you, The peace of God ſhal keep you & the God of peace ſhal be with you.* This is that that I would obſerve from this Text, That the peace of God is not enough to a gracious heart, except it may have the God of that peace. A carnal heart could be ſatisfied if he might but have outward peace, though it be not the peace of God; peace in the State and his trading would ſatisfie him: But mark how a godly heart goes beyond a carnal, al outward peace is not enough, but I muſt have

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the peace of God: But suppose you have the peace of God, Wil not that quiet you? No, I must have the God of peace, as the peace of God, so the God of peace, that is, I must enjoy that God that gives me the peace, I must have the cause as wel as the effect, I must see from whence my peace comes, and enjoy the fountain of my peace, as well as the stream of my peace; and so in other mercies, have I health from God, I must have the God of my health to be my portion, or else I am not satisfied: It is not life, but the God of my life; it is not riches, but the God of those riches that I must have, the God of my preservation, as wel as my preservation; a gracious heart is not satisfied without this; To have the God of the mercy, as wel as the mercy, In *Psal.* 73. 25. *Whom have I in Heaven but Thee, and there is none upon the Earth that I desire besides thee.* It is nothing in Heaven or Earth, can satisfie me, but thy self; if God give thee not only Earth but Heaven, that thou shouldest rule over Sun, Moon and Stars, and have the rule over the highest of the sons of men, it would not be enough to satisfie thee, except thou hadst God himself; There lies the first mystery of Contentment; and truly a contented man, though he be the most contented man in the world, yet he is the most unsatisfied man in the world, that is, Those things that wil satisfie the world, wil not satisfie him.

Secondly, There is this Mystery in Christian Contentation. *A Christian comes to Contentment, not so much by way of addition, as by way of Substraction*, that is his way of Contentment, and that is a way that the world hath no skil in. I open it thus, Not so much by the adding to what he would have, or to what he hath, not by adding more to his condition, but rather by substracting of his desires, and so to make his desires and condition to be even and equal. A carnal heart knows no way to be Contented but this, I have such and such an estate, and if I had this added to it, and the other comfort added that now I have not, then I should be contented; it may be I have lost my Estate, if I could have but that given to me, so as to make up my loss, then I should be a contented man: But now Contentment doth not come in that way, it comes not in I say by the adding to what thou wanteſt, but by the substracting of thy desires; it is all one to a Christian, either that I may get up unto what I would;

would have, or get my desires down to what I have; either that I may attain to what I do desire, or bring down my desires to what I have already attained; my estate is the same, for it is as suitable to me to bring my desire down to my condition, as it is to raise up my condition to my desire. Now I say a heart that hath no grace, and is not instructed in this Mystery of Contentment, knows no way to get contentment, but to have his estate raised up to his desires; but the other hath another way to Contentment, that is, he can bring his desires down to his estate, and so he doth attain to his Contentment. So the Lord fashions the hearts of the Children of men: Now if the heart of a man be fashioned to his condition, he may have as much contentment as if his condition be fashioned to his heart; some men have a mighty large heart, but they have a straight condition, and they can never have Contentment when their hearts are big and their condition is little; but now though a man cannot bring his condition to be as big as his heart, yet if he can bring his heart to be as little as his condition, to bring them even, from thence is Contentment. The world is infinitely deceived in this, To think that Contentment lies in having more than they have; here lies the bottom and root of all Contentment, when there is an evenness and proportion between our hearts and our condition; and that is the reason that many that are godly men that are in a low condition, live more sweet and comfortable lives than those that are richer: Contentment is not alwaies cloathed with silk, and purple, and velvets, but Contentment is sometimes in a russet suite, in a mean condition as well as in a higher; and many men that some times have had great estates, and God hath brought them into a lower condition, they have had more Contentment in that condition than the other: Now how can that possible be? Thus easily, For if you did but understand the root of Contentment, it consists in the suitableness and proportion of the spirit of a man to his estate, and the evenness, when one end is not longer and bigger than another: the heart is contented, there is comfort in that condition; now let God give a man never so great riches, yet if the Lord gives him up to the pride of his heart, he will never be contented: But now let God bring any one into

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a mean condition, and then let God but fashion and sute his heart to that condition and he wil be content. As now in a mans going, Suppose a man had a mighty long Leg, and his other Leg were short, why, though one of his Legs be longer than ordinary, yet he could not go so well as a man that hath both his Legs shorter than he. I compare a long Leg, when one is longer than another, to a man that hath a high condition, and is very rich, and a great man in the world, but he hath a great proud heart too, that is longer and larger than his condition: now this man cannot but be troubled in his condition: Now another man that is in a mean condition, his condition is low, and his heart is low too; so that his heart and his condition is both even together, and this man goes on with more ease abundantly than the other doth: So that now a gracious heart works after this manner, The Lord hath been pleased to bring down my condition, now if the Lord bring down my heart and make it even with my condition, then I am well enough: And so when God brings down his condition, he doth not so much labor to raise up his condition again, as to bring down his heart to his condition: The Heathens themselves they had a little glimps of this; they could say, That the best riches that is, it is the poverty of desires: that is a speech of a Heathen, that is, If a man or woman have their desires cut short; and have no large desires, that man and woman they are rich, when they can bring their desires to be but low: So this is the Art of Contentment. Not to seek to add to our conditions, but to substract from our desires. Another hath this, The way to be rich, saith he, it is not by encreasing of wealth, but by diminishing of our desires; for certainly that man or woman is a rich man or woman that hath their desires satisfied, now a contented man hath his desires satisfied; God satisfies his desires, that is, all considered, he is satisfied in his condition for the present to be the best condition, and so he comes to this Contentment by way of Substraction, and not Addition.

The Third thing in the Art of Contentment is this, *A Christian comes to Contentment, not so much by getting off his burden that is upon him, as by the adding another burden to him:* this is a way that flesh and blood hath little skil in. You wil say how is this?

this? In this manner, art thou afflicted, and is there a great load and burden upon thee by reaſon of thy affliction? thou thinkeſt there is no way in the world to get Contentment, but, O that this burden were but off, O it is a heavy load, and few know what a burden I have! What doeſt thou think there is no way for the Contentment of thy ſpirit but this getting off thy burden? O thou art deceived, the way of Contentment is to ad another burden, that is, labor to load and burden thy heart with thy ſin, and the heavyer the burden of thy ſin is to thy heart, the lighter will the burden of thy affliction be to thy ſoul, and ſo ſhalt thou come to be content: If thy burden were lightened that would content thee, thou thinkeſt there is no way to lighten it but to get it off, but thou art deceived, for if thou canſt get thy heart to be more burdened with thy ſin; thou wilt be leſs burdened with thy afflictions: You will ſay this is a ſtrange way, for a man or woman to get eaſe to their condition when they are burdened, to lay a greater burden upon them? You think there is no other way when you are afflicted, but to be jolly and merry, and get into company, Oh no, you are deceived, your burden will come again, alas this is a poor way to get his ſpirit quieted, poor man, the burden will be upon him again; but if thou wouldeſt have thy burden light, if thou canſt get alone and examine thy heart for thy ſin, and charge thy ſoul with thy ſin; if thy burden be in thy eſtate, for the abuſe of it, or if it be a burden upon thy body, for the abuſe of thy health, and ſtrength, and the abuſe of any mercies that now the Lord hath taken away from thee, thou haſt not honored God with thoſe mercies that thou haſt had, but thou haſt walked wantonly and careleſly; and ſo fall a bemoaning thy ſin before the Lord, and thou ſhalt quickly find the burden of thy affliction to be lighter than it was before; do but try this piece of skill and art, to get your ſouls contented with any low condition that God puts you into; many times in a family, when any affliction befals them, Oh what a deal of diſcontentment is there between man and wife, if croſt in their eſtates at Land, or ill news from Sea, or thoſe that they truſted are broke and the like, and perhaps ſomwhat in the family fals croſs between man and wife, or in reference to the chil-

children or ſervants, and there is nothing but brabling and diſcontent among them, now they many times are burdened with their own diſcontent, and perhaps will ſay one to another, This life is very uncomfortable for us to live thus diſcontented ſo as we do; but have you ever tried this way, the husband and the wife? have you ever got alone and ſaid, Come, O let us go, and humble our ſouls before God together, let us go into our chamber and humble our ſouls before God for our ſin, whereby we have abuſed thoſe mercies that God hath taken away from us, and we have provok'd God againſt us, O let us charge our ſelves with our ſin, and be humbled before the Lord together, have you tried ſuch a way as this is? Oh you would find the cloud would be taken away, and the Sun would ſhine in upon you, and you would have a great deal more Contentment than ever yet you had: If a mans eſtate be broken, either by plunderers, or any other way; now how ſhall this man have Contentment? how? By the breaking of his heart; God hath broken thy eſtate, Oh ſeek to him for the breaking of thy heart likewiſe; Indeed a broken eſtate, and a whol heart, a hard heart, will not joyn together, there will be no Contentment; but a broken eſtate, and a broken heart, will ſo ſute together, as there will be more Contentment than there was before; ad therefore to the breaking of thy eſtate, the breaking of thy heart what thou canſt, and that is the way to be contented in a Chriſtian manner, which is the Third Myſtery in Chriſtian Contentation.

The fourth thing is this, *It is not ſo much the removing of the affliction that is upon us, as the changing of the affliction, the Metamorphiſing of the affliction, when it is quite turned and changed into another thing*: I mean in regard of the uſe of it, though for the matter the affliction abide ſtil. The way of Contentment to a carnal heart it's only the removing of the affliction, Oh that it may be gone; no but ſaith a gracious heart, God hath taught me a way for Contentment though the affliction ſhall continue ſtil for the matter of it, but there is a vertue of grace to turn this affliction into good; it takes away but only the ſting and poyſon of it; As now, Suppoſe poverty, A mans eſtate is loſt; wel, is there no way to be contented til your eſtate be made

up again? Till your poverty be removed? Yes, certainly Christianity would teach Contentment, though poverty continues, yet it will teach you how to turn your poverty into spiritual riches; that you shall be poor still for your outward estate; but this shall be altered, whereas before it was once a natural evil to you, it comes now to be turned into a spiritual benefit to you, and so you come to be content. It is a speech of *Ambrose*, Even *poverty it self it is riches unto holy men*. Godly men do make their poverty turn to be riches, they get more riches out of their poverty than ever they get out of their revenues, out of all their trading in this world; they never had such incomes as they have had out of their poverty; This a carnal heart will think strange that a man shall make poverty to be the most gainfull trade that ever he had in the world; I am perswaded that many Christians have found it so, that they have got more good by their poverty than ever they got by all their riches, you find it in Scripture, therefore think not this strange that I am speaking of, you do not find any one godly man that came out of an affliction worse than when he came into it, though for a while he was shaken, yet at last he was better for an affliction: but a great many godly men you find have been worse for their prosperity, scarce one Godly man that you read in Scripture of but was worse for prosperity (except *Daniel* and *Nehemiah*, I do not read of any hurt they got by their prosperity that they had) scarce (I think) is any one example of any godly man but was rather worse for his prosperity than better; so that you see it's no such strange thing, neither to one that is gracious that they shall get good by their affliction: *Luther* hath such an expression in his Comment upon the 5. Chap. of the *Galathians*, in the 17, verse in his Comment upon that place saith, *A Christian becometh a mighty Worker and a wonderful Creator*, that is (saith he) to create out of heavinesse joy, out of terror comfort, out of sin righteousnesse, out of death life, and brings light out of darkness. It was Gods Prerogative and great Power, his Creating Power to command the light to shine out of darkness; now a Christian is partaker of the Divine Nature, so the Scripture saith, Grace it is part of the Divine Nature, and being part of the Divine Nature it hath an impression of Gods Omnipotent Power

Power, that is, to create light out of darkneſs, to bring good out of evil, now by this way a Chriſtian comes to be content. God hath given a Chriſtian ſuch a virtue, as can turn afflictions into mercies, can turn darkneſs into light; if a man had the power that Chriſt had when the water pots were fil'd, he could by a word turn the water into wine; if you that have nothing but water to drink, yet if you had a power to turn it in to wine then you may be contented: Certainly a Chriſtian hath received this power from God, to work thus miraculouſly; it is the nature of Grace to turn water into wine, that is, to turn the water of your affliction, into the wine of Heavenly conſolation. If you underſtand this in a carnal way, I know it will be ridiculous for a Miniſter to ſpeak thus before you, and many carnal people are ready to make ſuch expeſſions as theſe to be ridiculous, underſtanding them in a carnal way: Juſt as *Nicodemus* in the 3. of *John, What! can a man be born when he is old, can he enter the ſecond time into his mothers womb and be born?* So when we ſpeak of grace that it can turn water into wine, and turn povertie into riches, and make poverty a gainful trade ſaith a carnal heart, Let them have that trade if they will, and let them have water to drink, and ſee if they can turn it into wine: Oh! take heed thou ſpeakeſt not in a ſcornfull way of the waies of God; grace hath the power to turn afflictions into mercies. Two men ſhall have one affliction, and to one man it ſhal be as gall and wormwood, and it ſhall be wine, and honey, and delightfulneſs, and joy, and advantage, and riches, to another. This is the myſtery of Contentment, not ſo much by removing the evil, as by metamorphoſing the evil, by changing the evil into good.

The fifth thing is this, *A Chriſtian comes to this Contentment, by making up the wants of his condition, by the performance of the work of his condition.* This is the way of Contentment. There is ſuch a condition that I am in, many wants, I want this and the other comfort, wel, how ſhal I come to be ſatisfied and content? A carnal heart thinks this, I muſt have my wants made up or elſe it is impoſſible that I ſhould be content: No, but ſaith a gracious heart, What is the duty of the condition God hath put me into? Indeed my condition is changed, I was not long

since in a prosperous condition, but God hath changed my condition: the Lord hath called me no more *Naomi*, but *Marah*: Now what am I to do? What can I think now? Are those duties that God requires of me in the condition that he hath now put me into? And let me put forth my strength in the performance of the duties of my present condition. Others they spend their thoughts in those things that shall disturb and disquiet them; and so they grow more and more discontented; yea, but let me spend my thoughts in thinking what my duty is, what is the duty of my present condition which I am in: Oh! saith a man whose condition is changed, and he hath lost his estate, Had I but my estate that I had heretofore, how would I use it to Gods Glory! But God hath made me to see that I did not honor him with my estate as I ought to have done, Oh! had I it again, I would do better than ever I did, but this may be but a temptation, therefore you should rather think, What doth God require of me in the condition I am now brought into? And thou shouldest labor to bring thy heart to quiet and Contentment, by setting thy Soul on work about the duties of thy present condition; And the truth is, I know nothing more available for the quieting of a Christian Soul, and getting Contentment than this, The setting thy heart on work about the duties of thy very present condition that now thou art in, and take heed of thy thoughts about other conditions as a meer Temptation. I cannot compare the folly of men and women that think to get Contentment with their musing about other conditions, better than to the way of Children; perhaps they are gotten upon an Hill, and they look a good way off and see another Hill, and they think if they were on the top of that, then they were able to touch the clouds with their Fingers; but when they are on the top of that Hill, Alas, then they are as far from the clouds, as they were before. So it is with many that think, If they were in such a condition then they should have Contentment; and perhaps they get into that condition, and then they are as far from Contentment as before: But then they think if they were in another condition, they would be contented, and then when they have got into that condition, they are stil as far from Contentment as before. No, no, let me consider what is the duty

of

of my present condition, and content my heart with this, and say, Well, though I am in a low condition, yet I am serving the Counsels of God in that condition wherein I am; it is the Counsel of God that hath brought me into this condition that I am in, and I desire to serve the Counsel of God in that condition. There is a notable Scripture concerning *David*. It is said of him, That he served his Generation, after *David* had served his Generation according to the Will of God, then he slept. It is a Speech of *Paul* concerning him, in *Act.* 13. 36. So it is in your Books, *After he had served his Generation according to the Will of God*: But now the word that is translated *Will*, it is the *Counsel of God*, and so it may be Translated as well, *That after* David *in his Generation had served Gods Counsel, then he fell asleep*. We ordinarily take the words thus; That *David served his Generation*; that is, He did the work of his Generation, that is to serve a mans Generation. But it is more plain, if you read it thus: After *David* in his Generation had served the Counsel of God, then *David* fel asleep. O that should be the care of a Christian to serve our Gods Counsel. What is the Counsel of God? The condition that I am in, God doth put me into it by his own Counsel, the Counsel of his own Will; Now I must serve Gods Counsel in my Generation, look what is the Counsel of God in my condition, I must look to serve that: and so I shall have my heart quieted for the present, and shall live and die peaceably, and comfortably, if I be careful to serve Gods Counsel.

A sixth thing in the Mystery of Contentment is this, *A gracious heart is contented by the melting of his wil and desires into Gods wil and desires*, by this means he gets Contentment; and this is a Mystery to a carnal heart. It is not by having his own desires satisfied as before, but by melting his will and desires into Gods wil: So that he comes to have (in one sense) his desires satisfied though he hath not the thing that before he did desire, yet he comes to be satisfied in this, because he makes his will to be all one with Gods Will. This is a little higher degree than submitting to the wil of God. You all say, you should submit to Gods will; but a Christian hath gotten beyond this; that is; he can make Gods will and his to be the same: so it is said of

of Beleevers, that they are joyned to the Lord, and are one ſpirit; that is, look what Gods Will is, I do not only ſee reaſon to ſubmit to it, but Gods Will is my Will: When the Soul can make over (as it were) its Will to God, It muſt needs then have Contentment. Others would fain get the thing they do deſire, O! but ſaith a gracious heart, that that God would have I would have too; I will not only yeild to it, but I would have it too; A gracious heart hath learn'd this art, Not only to make the Commanding Will of God to be its own will, that is What God commands me to do, I will do it; but to make the Providential will of God, and the Operative will of God to be his wil alſo: God commands this thing, which perhaps you that are Chriſtians may have ſome skil in, but whatſoever God works, you muſt will as well as what God commands, you muſt make Gods Providential will, and his Operative Will, as well your Will as Gods Will, and ſo you muſt come to Contentment: Here a Chriſtian makes over his Will to God, and in making over his Will to God, he hath no other Will but only Gods: As ſuppoſe a man makes over his Debt to another man, if that man that I owe the Debt to, be ſatisfied and contented, I am ſatisfied, becauſe I have made it over to him, and I need not be diſcontented and ſay, My Debt is not paid, and I am not ſatisfied; Yes, you are ſatisfied, for he that you made over your Debt to he is ſatisfied. Juſt thus it is for all the world between God and a Chriſtian, a Chriſtian's heart makes over his will to God; now then, if Gods will be ſatisfied, then I am ſatisfied, for I have then no will of mine own, it is melted into the Will of God; for ſo that is the excellency of Grace, Grace doth not only ſubject the Will to God, but it doth melt the Will into Gods will, ſo that they are now but one will; what a ſweet ſatisfaction muſt the ſoul have then in this condition, when all is made over to God: You will ſay, This is hard. I wil expreſs it a little more: A gracious heart muſt needs have ſatisfaction this way, becauſe godlineſs doth teach him this, To ſee that his good is more in God, than in himſelf; the good of my life, and comforts, and my happineſs, and my glory, and my Riches is more in God than it is in my ſelf: (that perhaps we may ſpeake to further, when we come to the Leſſons that are to be learned.)

learned) But upon this it is, that a gracious heart hath Contentment, he doth melt his will into Gods, for ſaith he, if God have glory, I have glory, Gods glory is my glory, and therefore Gods will is mine, if God have riches, then I have riches, if God be magnified, then I am magnified, if God be ſatisfied, then I am ſatisfied, Gods wiſdom and holineſs is mine, and therefore his will muſt needs be mine, and my will muſt needs be his; here is the art of a Chriſtians Contentment, he melts his will into the will of God, and makes over his wil to God, *O Lord, thou ſhalt chuſe our inheritance for us* Pſal. 73.

The Seventh thing in the Art of Contentment is this, *The Myſtery conſiſts not ſo much by bringing any thing without, to to make my condition more comfortable, as to purge out ſomthing that is within.* The men of the world now, when they would have Contentment, and want any thing, Oh they muſt have ſomewhat from without to content them; but ſaith a godly man, let me get ſomething out that is in already, and then I ſhall come to Contentment; As ſuppoſe a man hath an aguiſh humor that makes his drink taſt bitter, now ſaith he, You muſt put ſome Sugar into my drink, and his Wife puts in ſome, and yet the drink taſts bitter, Why? Becauſe the bitterneſs comes from a bitter cholerick humor within; but let the Phyſitian come and give him a bitter Potion to purge out the bitterneſs that is within, and then he can taſt his drink well enough: Juſt thus it is with the men of the world, Oh ſuch a condition is bitter, and if I could have ſuch and ſuch a mercy added to this mercy, then it would be ſweet; now if God ſhould put a ſpoonful or two of Sugar in, it would be bitter ſtill. But the way to Contentment is to purge out thy luſts and bitter humors. *Jam.* 4. 1. *From whence are wars, and ſtrifes, are they not from your luſts that are within you?* They are not ſo much from things without, but from within; as ſomtimes I have ſaid, It is not all the ſtormes that are abroad that can make an earthquake, but the vapors that are got within: and ſo if thoſe luſts that are within in thy heart, if they were got out, thy condition would be a contented condition. Theſe are the myſterious waies of Godlineſs, that the men of the world never think of, When didſt thou ever think of ſuch a way as this is,

for

for to go and purge out the distempers of thy heart that are within: Here are Seven particulars now named, there were a great many more that I had thought of. And now without the understanding of these things, and the practice of them, you will never come to a true Contentation in your way, Oh you will be bunglers in this Trade of Christianity; but the right perceiving of these things, will help you to be instructed in it as in a Mystery.

SERMON, III. *at* Stepney, Aug. 10. 1645.

PHIL. 4. 11.

For I have learned in whatsoever state I am therewith to be content.

THE Mystery of Contentment will appear yet further. A gracious heart gets Contentment in a mysterious way, a way that the world is not acquainted with.

Eightly, *He lives upon the dew of Gods blessing*: It's the similitude of one *Adrian Junius* setting out a contented man by a *Grashopper*, leaping and skipping up and down, that lives upon the dew and he hath this motto, *I am content with what I have, and hope for better*. A Grashopper doth not live upon the grass as other things do, you cannot know what it feeds upon, other things though as little as Grashoppers, yet feed upon seeds or little flies, and such things, but the Grashopper, you know not what it feeds upon, So a Christian can get food that the world knows not of

of, in a ſecret way is a Chriſtian fed by the dew of the bleſſing of God, a poor man or woman that hath but a little which hath grace, lives a more contented life than his rich neighbor that hath a great deal coming in, we find it ſo ordinarily, ſo that though they have but a little, yet they have a ſecret bleſſing of God going in it, that they are not able to expreſs to any other man; if you would come to them and ſay, How comes it that you live ſo comfortable as you do? they are not able to tell you what they have, but they find there is a ſweetneſs in what they do enjoy, and they know this by experience that they never had ſuch ſweetneſs in former times, that though they had more plenty in former times than now they have, yet they know they had not ſuch ſweetneſs; but how this comes they cannot tel; and we may ſhew ſome particulars, even in that Godly men do enjoy, that makes their condition to be ſweet.

As now, Take theſe four or five particulars that a Godly man finds Contentment in what he hath, though it be never ſo little.

1. *Becauſe in what he hath, he hath the love of God*, he hath Gods love to him in what he hath: If a King ſhould ſend a piece of meat from his own table, it is a great deal more comfortable to a Courtier than if he had twenty diſhes at ordinary allowance, if the King ſend but any little thing and ſay, Go and carry this to ſuch a man as a token of my love, Oh how delightful is that unto him! Are your husbands at Sea, and ſend you a token of their love, it is more than forty times ſo much that you have in your houſes already: Every good thing the people of God do enjoy, they enjoy it in Gods love, as a token of Gods love, and coming from Gods eternal love unto them, this muſt needs be very ſweet unto them.

2. *What they have it is ſanctified to them for good*; Other men have what they enjoy in a way of common providence, but the Saints in a ſpecial way; Others have what they have and there is all, they have meat, and drink, and houſes, and cloaths, and money, and that's all. But a gracious heart finds contentment in this, I have it, and I have a ſanctified uſe of it too; I find God going along with what I have to draw my heart neerer to him, and ſanctifie my heart to him; If I find my heart drawn

neerer to God by what I enjoy; it's more a great deal than if I have it without any sanctifying my heart by it; there's a secret dew that goes along with it, there's the dew of Gods love in it, and the dew of sanctification.

3. *A gracious heart what he hath, he hath it upon free cost, he is not like to be called to pay for what he hath*: The difference between what a Godly man hath, and a wicked man, is in this: A Godly man is as a child in an Inn; an In-keeper hath his child in his house, and the Father provides his dyet, and lodging, and what is fit for him; Now there comes a stranger, and the stranger hath Dinner and Supper provided, and lodging, but the stranger must pay for all; it may be the Childs fare is meaner than the fare of the stranger, the stranger hath boyled, and roast, and bak'd; but he must pay for it, there must come a reckoning for it. Just thus it is, many of Gods people have but mean fare; but God as a Father provides it, and it is on free cost, and they must not pay for what they have, it is paid for before; but the wicked in all their pomp, and pride, and bravery, they have what they call for, but there must come a reckoning for all, they must pay for all in the conclusion: And is it not better to have a little upon free cost, than to come to have all to pay for? Grace doth shew a man that what he hath, he hath it on free cost, from God as from a father, and therefore must needs be very sweet.

Fourthly, A Godly man may very well be content, though he hath but little, *For what he hath he hath it by right of Jesus Christ, by the purchase of Jesus Christ*, he hath a right to it, another manner of right to what he hath, than any wicked man can have to what he hath; a wicked man hath these outward things; I do not say they are usurpers of what they have, but they have a right to it, and that before God, But how? It is a right by meer donation, that is, God by his free bounty doth give it to them; but the right that the Saints have, it is a right of purchase, it is paid for, and it is their own, and they may in a holy manner, and holy way, challenge whatsoever they have need of. We cannot express the right of a holy man, the difference between his right, and the right of the wicked more fully than by this similitude; A Malefactor that is condemned to die, yet

yet he hath by favor granted to him his supper provided over night, and you cannot say though the Malefactor hath forfeited all his right to all things, to every bit of bread, yet if he shall have a supper granted to him, he doth not steal it, though all his right is forfeited by his fault; after he is once condemned he hath no right to any thing. So it is with the wicked, they have forfeited all their right to all comforts in this world, they are condemned by God as Malefactors and are going to execution; but if God will in his bounty give them something to preserve them here in the world, they cannot be said to be theeves or robbers: Now a man hath granted to him a supper over night before his Execution, but is that like the supper that he was wont to have in his own house, when he Eat his own bread, and had his Wife and Children about him? Oh! a dish of green Herbs at home would be a great deal better than any dainties in such a Supper as that is; but now a Child of God hath not a right meerly by Donation, but what he hath it is his own through the purchase of Christ; every bit of bread that thou eatest, if thou beest a godly man or woman, Jesus Christ hath bought it for thee, thou goest to market and buyest thy meat and drink with thy Money, but know that before thou hast bought it, or paid Money, Christ hath bought it at the hand of God the Father with his blood; thou hast it at the hands of men for Money, but Christ hath bought it at the hand of his Father by blood: and certainly it is a great deal better and sweeter now though it be but a little.

Fifthly, There's another thing that shews the sweetness that there is in that little that the Saints have, by which they come to have Contentment, whereas others cannot: that is, *Every little that they have, it is but as an earnest penny of all the glory that is reserved for them, it is given them by God, but as the fore-runner of those eternal mercies that the Lord intends for them*, Now if a man hath but twelve pence given to him as an earnest penny for some great possession that he must have; is not that better than if he had fourty pounds given unto him otherwise? So every comfort that the Saints have in this world, it is an earnest penny to them of those eternal mercies that the Lord hath provided for them; as every affliction that the wicked have here it is but the be-

ginning of ſorrows, and fore-runner of thoſe eternal ſorrows that they are like to have hereafter in Hell; to every comfort thou haſt, is a fore-runner of thoſe eternal mercies thou ſhalt have with God in Heaven; not only the conſolations of Gods Spirit as the fore-runner of thoſe eternal comforts thou ſhalt have in Heaven; but when thou ſitteſt at thy Table, and rejoyceſt with thy Wife and Children, and Friends, thou maieſt look upon every one of thoſe but as a fore-runner, yea, the very earneſt penny of Eternal life unto thee. Now then if this be ſo, no marvell though a Chriſtian be contented; (this is a myſtery to the wicked:) I have what I have out of the love of God, and I have it ſanctified to me by God. and I have it of free coſt from God by the purchaſe of the blood of Jeſus Chriſt, and I have it as a fore-runner of thoſe eternal mercies that are reſerved for me; and in this my ſoul rejoyces, There's a ſecret dew of Gods goodneſs and Bleſſing upon him in his eſtate, that others have not: and by all this you may ſee the meaning of that Scripture, *Prov.* 16. 8. *Better is a little with righteouſneſs, than great revenues without right.* A man that hath but a little, yet if he hath it with righteouſneſs, it is better than a great deal without right; yea, better than the great revenues of the wicked: ſo you have it in another Scripture. That's the next Particular in *Chriſtian Contentment*; the Myſtery is in this, That he lives upon the dew of Gods bleſſing in all the good things that he doth enjoy.

The Ninth thing wherein the Myſtery of *Chriſtian Contentment* conſiſts, is this: *Not only the good things that he hath, he hath the dew of Gods bleſſing in them, and they are very ſweet to him; but all the afflictions, all the evils that do befall him, he can ſee love in them all; and can enjoy the ſweetneſs of love in his afflictions, as wel as in his mercies.* Yea, the truth is, The afflictions of Gods People come from the ſame Eternal Love that Jeſus Chriſt did come from. And that ſpeech of *Hierom*, *He is a happy man that is beaten when the ſtroke is a ſtroke of love.* All Gods ſtrokes are ſtrokes of love and mercy, *All Gods waies are mercy and truth to thoſe that fear him and love him*, Pſal. 25. 10. The waies of God, the waies of affliction, as wel as the waies of proſperity, are mercy and love to him. Grace gives a man an eye,

a pier-

a piercing eye to pierce into the Counſels of God, thoſe Eternal Counſels of God for good unto him, even in his afflictions to ſee the love of God in every affliction as well as in proſperity. Now this is a myſterie to carnal hearts, they can ſee no ſuch thing perhaps they think God loves them when he proſpers them, and makes them rich; but they think God loves them not when he doth afflict them, that's a Miſterie; but grace inſtructs men in that Myſtery, grace enables men to ſee love in the very frowns of Gods face, and ſo comes to receive Contentment.

In the tenth place, A godly man hath Contentment in the way of a Myſtery, *Becauſe as he ſees all his afflictions come from the ſame love that Jeſus Chriſt did: ſo he ſees them ſanctified in Jeſus Chriſt, ſanctified as a Mediator*, he ſees (I ſay) all the ſting and venom, and poyſon of them all to be taken out by the vertue of Jeſus Chriſt, the Mediator between God and Man: As now for inſtance, Thus, a Chriſtian when he would have Contentment falls a working, What is my affliction? Is it poverty, that God ſtrikes me withal? Jeſus Chriſt had not a houſe to hide his head in, the Fowls of the aire had neſts, and the Foxes had holes, but the Son of Man not a hole to hide his head in: now my poverty is ſanctified by Chriſts poverty, I can ſee by faith the curſe and ſting and venom of my poverty, taken out by the poverty of Jeſus Chriſt, Chriſt Jeſus he was poor in this world to deliver me from the curſe of my poverty, that it ſhould not be curſed unto me, then my poverty is not afflictive, if I can be contented in ſuch a condition. That is the way, not to ſtand and repine, becauſe I have not what others have, no, but I am poor, and Chriſt was therefore poor that he might bleſs my poverty to me.

And ſo again, Am I diſcouraged, diſhonored; is my good name taken away? why Jeſus Chriſt he had diſhonor put upon him, he was called *Beelzebub*, and a Samaritan, and they ſaid he had a Devil in him, all the foul aſperſions that could be were caſt upon Jeſus Chriſt, and this was for me, that I might have the diſgrace that is caſt upon me to be ſanctified unto me, whereas another man his heart is overwhelmed with diſhonor and diſgrace, and he goes this way to work to get Contentment; perhaps if you be ſpoken ill of, you have no

other

other way to ease and right your selves, but if they do rail upon you, you will rail upon them again; and thus you think to ease your selves. Oh! but a Christian hath another manner of way to ease himself; Others rail and speak ill of me, but did they not rail upon Jesus Christ, and speak evil of him? And what am I in comparison of Christ? And the subjection of Christ to such an evil, it was for me, that though such a thing should come upon me, I might know that the curse of it is taken from me through Christs subjection to that evil: thus a Christian can be contented when any body speaks ill of him: Now this is a Mysterie to you, to get Contentment after such a manner as this is. So, if men jeer and scoff at you, Did they not do so to Jesus Christ? they jeered and scoffed at him, and that when he was in his greatest extremitie upon the Cross, say they, Here's the King of the *Jews*, and they bowed the knee, and said, Hail King of the *Jews*, and put a reed into his hand and mocked him. Now I get contentment in the midst of scorns and jeers, by considering that Christ was scorn'd and by acting Faith upon that which Christ did suffer for me. So, am I in great pain of my body? Jesus Christ had as great pain upon his body as I have, though its true, he had not such kind of sickness as we have, but yet he had as great pain and tortures in his body, and that that was deadly to him, as wel as the sickness is to us: The exercising of Faith upon what Christ did endure, that's the way to get Contentment in the midst of our pains: one lies vexing and fretting and cannot bear his pain; art thou a Christian? hast thou ever tried this way of getting contentment, to act thy faith upon all the pains and sufferings that Jesus Christ did suffer? this would be the way of contentment; and a Christian gets contentment under pains after this manner sometimes one that is very godly and gracious, you shall have him lie under grievous pains and extremities very cheerfully, and you wonder at it; this is the way that he gets it, he gets it by acting his faith upon what pains Jesus Christ did suffer. Thou art afraid of death; the way to get Contentment, it is, by exercising thy faith upon the death of Jesus Christ; yea, it may be thou hast inward troubles in thy soul, and God withdraws himself from thee, but still thy faith is to be exercised upon the suf-

sufferings that Jesus Christ endured in his Soul, he powred forth his Soul before God, then when he sweat drops of water and blood, he was in an Agony in his very Spirit, and he found even God himself in a way to forsake him; now the acting thy Faith upon Jesus Christ thus, brings Contentment; And is not this a mystery to carnal hearts? A gracious heart finds Contentment in a way of a mystery: no marvel though Saint *Paul* saith, *I am instructed in a Mystery, to be contented in whatsoever condition I am in.*

In the Eleventh place, There is yet a further mystery (for this I hope you will find a very useful point unto you) and you will see what a plain way there is, (before we have done) for one that is skil'd in Religion to get Contentment, though it's hard for one that is carnal. I say, the eleventh Mystery in Contentment is this, *A gracious heart hath Contentment by fetching strength from Jesus Christ, he is able to bear his burden by fetching strength from another.* Now this is a riddle indeed, and it would be a ridiculous thing to be spoken of in the Schools of Phylosophers, to say, If there be a burden upon you, you must fetch strength from another, indeed to have another to come and stand under the burden, that way they would know; but that you shal be strengthened by another's strength that is not neer you to your outward view, that they would think ridiculous: but now a Christian finds satisfaction in every condition by getting strength from another, by going out of it self to Jesus Christ, and by Faith acting upon Christ, and bringing the strength of Jesus Christ into its own soul, and thereby is enabled to bear whatsoever God laies upon him, by the strength that he finds from Jesus Christ, *Of his fulneß do we receive grace for grace*; there is strength in Jesus Christ not only to sanctifie and save us, but strength to support us under al our burdens and afflictions, and Christ expects that when we are under any burden that we would act our Faith upon him to draw vertue and strength from him; the acting of *Faith*, that's the great Grace that is to be acted under afflictions, it's true, other graces should be acted, but the grace of *Faith* it draws strength from Christ, in looking upon him that hath the fulness of all strength to be conveyed into the hearts of all Beleevers. Now if

if a man hath a burden upon him, yet he can have ſtrength added to him, if the burden be doubled, yet if he can have his ſtrength to be trebled, the burden will not be heavier but lighter than it was before to our natural ſtrength. Indeed our afflictions may be heavy, and we cry out, O we cannot bear them, we cannot bear ſuch an affliction: Though thou canſt not tell how to bear it with thine own ſtrength, yet what canſt thou tell what thou ſhalt do with the ſtrength of Jeſus Chriſt? Thou ſaieſt thou canſt not bear it, why doſt thou think that Chriſt could not bear it? if Chriſt could bear it, why maieſt not thou come to bear it? You will ſay, can I have the ſtrength of Chriſt: Yea, that is made over to thee by faith, ſo the Scripture ſaith, *That the Lord is our ſtrength*, God himſelf is our ſtrength, and Chriſt is our ſtrength, divers Scriptures we have that way; that Chriſts ſtrength is thine, made over to thee, that ſo thou maieſt be able to bear whatſoever lies upon thee, and therefore we find ſuch a ſtrange kind of expreſſion in the Epiſtle of St. *Paul* to the *Colloſſians*, praying for the Saints, *That they might be ſtrengthened with all might according unto his glorious power*, unto what? *Unto all patience and long ſuffering with joyfulneſs, Strengthned with all might, according to the Power of God, the glorious Power of God, unto al patience and long ſuffering with joyfulneſs:* You may not therfore be content with a little ſtrength, ſo that you are able to bear what a man might bear by the ſtrength of reaſon and nature; but to be ſtrengthened with all might according to the glorious Power of God, unto al patience, and to all long ſuffering; Oh you that are now under very heavy and ſad afflictions more than ordinary, look upon this Scripture, and conſider how this Scripture is made good in you, why may you not have this Scripture made good in you, if you be Godly? You ſhould not be quiet in your own ſpirits, except that you in ſome meaſure do get this Scripture to be made good in you, ſo that you may with ſome comfort ſay, through Gods mercy I find that ſtrength coming into me that is here ſpoken of in this Scripture. You ſhall labor when you are under any great affliction (you that are Godly) to walk ſo, that others may ſee ſuch a Scripture made good in you; Here is the glorious Power of God that doth ſtrengthen his ſervants

vants to all long-ſuffering; and that with joyfulneſs. Alas it may be you do not exercite ſo much patience, as a wiſe man or a wiſe woman that hath but natural reaſon. But where is the power of God, the glorious power of God? where is the ſtrengthening with all might, unto all long-ſuffering and patience, and that with joyfulneſs? It is true, the ſpirit of a man may be able to ſuſtain his infirmities, may be able to ſuſtain and keep up his ſpirits, the natural ſpirit of a man, but much more then when this ſpirit is acted with grace and holineſs, and when it is filled with the ſtrength of Jeſus Chriſt, this is the way of a godly mans getting contentment, the Myſtery of it, it is by fetching in ſtrength from Jeſus Chriſt.

Twelfthly, Another Myſtery that there is in it, it is, *That a Godly heart, enjoyes much of God in every thing that it hath, and doth know how to make up all wants in God himſelf*: that is another Myſtery, he hath God in what he hath; that I ſpoke to ſomwhat before, in ſhewing the dew of Gods bleſſing in what he hath, for God is able to let out a great deal of his power in little things, and therefore the miracles that God hath wrought, have been as much in little things as in great; now as God lets out a great deal of his power in working miracles in ſmaller things, ſo he lets out a great deal of goodneſs in mercy, in comforting and rejoycing the hearts of his people in little things as well as in great; there may be as much riches in a pearl as in a great deal of lumber; but now this is a diſtinct thing.

Further, A gracious heart as he lives upon Gods dew in a little that he hath, ſo when that little that he hath ſhall be taken from him, what ſhall he do then? Then you will ſay, if a man have nothing, there can be nothing fetcht out of nothing: But if the children of God have their little taken from them, they can make up all their wants in God himſelf: Such a man is a poor man, the plunderers came and tooke away all that he had, what ſhall he do then when all is gone? But when all is gone, there is an art and skill that godlineſs teaches to make up all thoſe loſſes in God. Many men that have their houſes burnt, go about gathering, and ſo get up by many hands a little; but a Godly man knows whither to go to get up all, even in God

himself, so as he shall enjoy the quintessence of the same good and comfort as he had before, for a Godly man doth not live so much in himself as he lives in God. This is now a mystery to a carnal heart; I say, a gracious man doth not live so much in himself as he doth in God, he lives in God continually; if there be any thing cut off from the stream, he knows how to go to the Fountain and makes up all there; God is All in All while he lives; I say, it is God that is All in All. *Am not I to thee* (saith *Elkanah* to *Hannah*) *instead of ten children?* So saith God to a gracious heart, Thou wantest this, thy Estate is plundered: Why, Am not I to thee in stead of ten Houses, and ten Shops? I am to thee in stead of *All*; yet not only *in stead* of All, but come to me and thou shalt *have All again in me.* This indeed is an excellent Art, to be able to draw from God what it had before in the Creature: Christian, How didst thou enjoy comfort before; Was the Creature any other to thee but a Conduit, a Pipe that did convey Gods goodness to thee? The Pipe is cut off saith God, Come to me to the Fountain, and drink immediately, though the Beams be taken away, yet the Sun remains the same in the Firmament as ever it was: What is that that satisfies God himself, but because he doth enjoy all Fulness in himself? so he comes to have satisfaction in himself: Now if thou enjoyest God to be thy portion, if thy soul can say with the Church, in *Lament.* 3. 24. *The Lord is my portion, saith my soul.* Why shouldest thou not be satisfied and contented as God? God is contented, he is in eternal Contentment in himself; now if thou hadst that God to be thy portion, why shouldest not thou be contented with him alone? God is contented with himself alone; if thou hast him thou mayest be contented with him alone; and it may be, that is the reason that thy outward comforts are taken from thee, that God may be All in All in thee: It may be whilst thou hadst these things here, they did share with God in thy affections, a great part of the stream of thy affection ran that way; now God would have the full stream run to him: As you know it is with a man that hath water comes to his house, and if there be severall Pipes, upon which he finds the water comes but scantly into his Washhouse, he will rather stop the other Pipes, that he may have all

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the water come in where he would have it. So here it may be God had some stream of thy affection that ranne to him then when thou didst enjoy these things; Yea, but a great deal was let out to the Creature, a great deal of thy affections did run wast; Now the Lord would not have the affections of his Children to run wast; he doth not care for other mens affections, but for thine they are precious, and God would not have them to run wast, therefore doth he cut off thy other Pipes, that thy heart might run wholly upon him: As if you have Children, because you have servants perhaps do feed them, and give them things, you perceive that your servants do steal away the Hearts of your Children, you would hardly be able to bear it, you would be ready to turn away such a Servant, and when the Servant is gone, the Child is at a great loss, it hath not the Nurse; but the Father or Mother intends by her putting away, that the affections of the Child might run the more strongly towards himself, or herself; and what loss hath the Child that the affections that run in a rough Channel before towards the servant, it runns towards the Mother? So, those affections that run towards the Creature, God would have them run towards himself, that so he may be All in All to thee here in this World. And a gracious heart can indeed tel how to enjoy God to be All in All to him: that is the happiness of Heaven, to have God to be All in All. The Saints in Heaven have not Houses and Lands, and Money, and Meat, and drink, and Cloaths. You will say they do not need them: Why do they not? It is because God is All in All to them immediately. Now while thou livest in this world, thou mayest come to enjoy much of God, you may have much of Heaven; while we live here in this life we may come to enjoy much of the very life that there is in Heaven, and what is that but the enjoyment of God to be all in all to us? There is one text in the *Revelations* that speaks of the glorious condition of the Church that is like to be even here in this world, *Rev.* 21.22. *And I saw no Temple therein, for the Lord God Almighty, and the Lamb, are the Temple of it; and the City had no need of the Sun, neither of the Moon to shine in it, for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.* They had no need of the Sun or Moon. It speaks of such a glorious condition that

the Church is like to be in here in this world; this doth not speak of Heaven: and that appears plainly that this is not spoken of Heaven, but of a glorious estate that the Church shall be in here, in this world, for it follows presently in the 24. and 26. verses, *And they* (speaking of the Kings of the earth:) *And the Kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor unto it*: Why, the Kings of the Earth shall not bring their glory and honor into Heaven; but this is such a time when the Kings of the Earth shall bring in their glory and honor to the Church. And in the 26. verse, *And they shal bring the glory and honor of the Nation into it*; therefore it must needs be meant here in this world and not in Heaven. Now if there be such a time here in this world, that God shal be All in All, that in no comparison there shal be no such need of Creatures as now there is, then the Saints should labor to live as neer that life as possibly they can, that is, to make up all in God: Oh that you would but mind this mystery, that it may be a reality to the hearts of the Saints in such times as these are, they would find this priviledge, that they get by Grace, to be worth thousands of worlds: Hence is that of *Jacob* that I mentioned in another case, it is remarkable, and comes in fully here, in *Gen.* 33. that notable speech of *Jacob* when his brother *Esau* did meet him, ye find in one place, that *Esau* he refused *Jacobs* present, in the 8. verse, when *Jacob* gave his present to him, he refused it, and told *Jacob* that he had enough; *What meanest thou by al this drove which I meet? And he said, These are to find grace in thy sight*: *And* Esau *said, I have enough.* Now in the 11. verse there *Jacob* urges it still, (and saith *Jacob*) *I beseech thee take it, for I have enough*; now in your books it is the same in English, *I have enough* (saith *Esau*;) and *I have enough* (saith *Jacob*:) but in the Hebrew *Jacobs* word is different from *Esau's*, *Jacob's* word signifies, *I have all things*, and yet *Jacob* was poorer than *Esau*. Oh this should be a shame to us, that an *Esau* should say, I have enough; but now a Christian should say, I have not only enough; but *I have all*: how hath he all? Because he hath God that is All; And it was a notable speech of one, *He hath all things, that hath him that hath all things.* Surely thou hast all things because thou hast him *for thy portion*, who hath all things: God hath

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all things in himself, and thou hast God to be thine for thy portion, and in that thou hast all, and this is the mysterie of Contentment: It makes up all wants in God, this is that that the men of the world have little skill in.

Now I have divers other things yet to open in the Mysterie of Contentment. I should shew likewise that a godly man not only makes up all in God, but finds enough in himself to make up all, to make up all in himself, not from himself, but in himself, and that may seem to be stranger than the other: to make up all in God is somewhat, nay to make up all in himself, not from himself, but in himself, that is, a gracious heart hath so much of God within himself, that he hath enough there to make up all his wants that are without. In *Prov.* 14. 14 *A good man shall be satisfied from himself*, from that that is within himself, that is the meaning, a gracious man he hath a bird within his own bosome that makes him melodie enough, though he wants musick, *The Kingdom of heaven is within you*: In *Luke*, 17. 21. *He hath a Kingdom within him, and a Kingdom of God*: you see him spoken ill of abroad, he hath a conscience within him that makes up the want of a name and credit, that is instead of a thousand witnesses.

Thirteenth, *A gracious heart fetches Contentment from the Covenant that God hath made with him.* Now this is a way of fetching Contentment that the men of the world know not of: they can fetch Contentment, if they have the creature to satisfie them: But to fetch Contentment from the covenant of grace that they have little skill in. I should here have opened two things; First, how to fetch Contentment from the covenant of grace in generall. (But I shall speak to that in the next Sermon and now only a word to the second:) Secondly, how he fetches Contentment from the particular branches of the covenant, that is, from the particular promises that he hath for the supplying of every particular want: there is no condition that a godly man or woman can be in, but there is some promise or other in the Scripture to help him in that condition. And that is the way of his Contentment, to go out to the promises and fetch from the promise, that which may supply: But this is but a dry businesse to a carnal heart; but it is the

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most real thing in the world to a gracious heart; When he finds want of Contentment he repairs to the Promise, and the Covenant; and falls to pleading the Promises that God hath made. As I should have shewed several promises that God hath made, let the affliction be what it will, I will but only mention one that is the saddest affliction of all; in case of the Visitation and the Plague. In *Psal.*91. now those that cannot have their friends come to them by reason of the plague, and that cannot have other comforts; in other afflictions they might have their friends and other things to comfort them, but in that they cannot, *Psal.* 21. 10. *There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling*; Then here is a promise for the pestilence in the 5. and 6. verses, this is a Scripture to those that are in danger of it. You will say, this is a promise, that the plague shall not come nigh them, but mark these two are joyned, *There shall no evil befal thee*; *neither shall the plague come nigh thee*, The *evil of it* shall not come nigh thee.

Object. You will say, *It doth come to many godly men, and how can they make use of this Scripture? it is rather a Scripture that may trouble them, because here is a promise that it shal not come nigh them, and yet it doth come nigh them as well as others.*

Answ. First, This is the answer I would give, The promises of outward deliverances that were made to the people of God in the time of the Law were to be understood then a great deal more literally, and fulfilled more literally, than in the times of the Gospel, God makes it up otherwise with as much mercy; though God made a covenant of Grace and eternal life in Christ with them, yet I think there was another covenant too, that God speaks of as a distinct convenant for outward things to deal with his people by, according to their waies either in outward prosperity, or in outward afflictions, more than now, in a more punctual set way, then in the times of the Gospel; and therefore when the *Children of Israel* did but sin against God, they were sure to have publick judgments to come upon them, and if they did wel, alwaies publick mercies; the general constant way of God was to deal with the People of the Jews according as they did well or ill, (in an ordinary way) with outward judgments and outward mercies: but it's not so now in these times

times of the Gospel; we cannot bring such a certain conclusion, that God did deal so severely with men by such and such afflictions, that he will deal so with them now: and so that they shal have outward prosperity as they had then: therefore that is the first thing for the understanding of this and all other texts of that kind.

The second answer I would give is this; It may be their faith doth not reach to this promise; and God brings many times many outward afflictions, because the faith of his people doth not reach the promise, and that not only in the old Testament, but in the time of the new Testament; *Zachariah* his time may be said to be in the time of the new Testament, when he was struck with dumbness because he did not beleeve, and that is given to be the cause why he was struck with dumbness. But you will say now, Hath Faith warrant to beleeve deliverance, that it shal be fully delivered? I dare not say so, but it may act upon it, to beleeve that God wil make it good his own way; perhaps you have not done so much, and so upon that, this promise is not fulfilled to you.

Thirdly, When God doth make such promises to his people, yet still it must be with this reservation, that God must have liberty to these three things.

1. That notwithstanding his promise, he will have liberty to make use of any thing for your chastisement.

2. That he must have liberty to make use of your estates, or liberties, or lives, for the furtherance of his own ends: If it be to be a stumbling block to wicked and ungodly men, God must have liberty; though he hath made a promise to you, he will not lose the propriety that he hath in your estates and lives.

3. God must have so much liberty to make use of what you have, for to shew that his waies are unsearchable, and his judgments past finding out, God reserves these three things in his hand still.

Object. But you wil say, *What good is there then in such a promise that God makes to his people?*

Answ. 1. That thou art under the protection of God more than others. *Obj.* But what comfort is this if it doth befall me?

Answ.

Answ. Thou hast this comfort, that the evil of it shall be taken from thee, that if God will make use of this affliction for other ends, yet he will do it so as he will make it up to thee some other way. Perhaps you have given your children such a thing, but yet afterwards if you have use of that thing, you will come and say, I must have it, Why father may the child say, you gave it me? But saith the father I must have it, and I will make it up to you some other way: Now the child doth not think that the fathers love is ever a whit the less to him. So when there is any such promise as this is, that God by his promise gives thee his protection, and yet for all that such a thing befals thee, it is but as if the father should say, I gave you that indeed, but let me have it and I will make it up to you some other way that shall be as good; saith God, let me have your health and liberty, and life, and it shall be made up to you some other way.

Secondly, When ever the plague or pestilence comes to those that are under such a promise, it is for some speciall and notable work, and God requires of them to search and examine in a speciall manner to find out his meaning; there is so much to be learned in the promise that God hath made concerning this particular evil, that the people of God they may come to quiet and content their hearts in this affliction. I read in this *Psalm* that God hath made a promise to his people, to deliver them from the plague and pestilence, and yet I do find it to come: It may be I have not made use of my faith in this promise heretofore; and if God do bring afflictions upon me, yet God will make it up some other way, God made a promise to deliver me, or at least to deliver me from all the evil of it, now if this thing doth befall me and yet I have a promise of God certainly the evil of it is taken away, this promise tells me that if it doth befall me, yet it is for some notable end, and because God hath use of my life, and intends to fetch about his glory some way that I know not of: And if he will come in a fatherly way of chastisement, yet I wil be satisfied in the thing: So a Christian heart by reasoning out of the Word, comes to satisfie his soul in the middest of such a heavie hand of God and in such a distressed condition as that is. Now carnal hearts they find

find not power in the Word, that healing vertue that there is in the Word, to heal their diſtracted cares, and the troubles of their ſpirits; but now, thoſe that are godly when they come to hear the Word, they find out, that in the Word there is a plaiſter to all their wounds, and ſo they come to have eaſe and contentment, in ſuch conditions as are very grievous and miſerable unto others. But now, for other particular promiſes, and more generally for the Covenant of Grace, how, and in what myſterious way the Saints do work to fetch out Contentment and ſatisfaction to their ſouls, we ſhal refer to the next time.

SERMON, IV. *at* Stepney, Aug. 17. 1645.

PHIL. 4. 11.

For I have learned in whatſoever ſtate I am, therewith to be content.

IN the laſt exerciſe we ſpoke of divers things in the myſtery of Contentment, and in the cloſe we ſpoke of two more, but we could not have time to open either of them, I ſhal open them a little more largely, and then proceed to ſome few more, and ſo to other things in the point.

That is the next thing, A Chriſtian heart hath not only contentment in *God*, (and certainly, he that hath God, muſt have al, he that hath him that hath all, he hath al) *But he is able to make up all his outward wants of Creature-comforts from what he finds in himſelf*: That may ſeem to be more ſtrange; It is true, perhaps we may convince men though they do not feel by experience what it is to make up all in God, yet we may convince them that if they have him that hath all things, then they have all; for there is ſuch a fulneſs in God, he being the infinite firſt Being of all things that may make up all their wants.

But here is another thing, that is further: I say, A Godly man can make up whatsoever he wants without the creature, he can make it up in himself, in *Proverbs* 14. verse 14. *A good man is satisfied in himself*: as now, If he wants outward comforts, good chear, feasting; a good Conscience is a continual feast, he can make up the want of a feast by that peace he hath in his own Conscience: if he wants melody abroad, he hath a bird within him that sings the most melodious songs that are in the world, and the most delightful. And then, Doth he want honor? he hath his own Conscience witnessing for him, that is as a thousand witnesses, the Scripture saith in *Luke* 17. verse 21. *Neither shal they say, Lo, here; or Lo, there: for behold the Kingdom of God is within you*; A Christian then whatsoever he wants he can make it up, for he hath a Kingdom in himself, the Kingdom of God is within him. If one that is a King should meet with a great deal of trouble when he is abroad, yet he contents himself with this, I have a Kingdom of mine own: now here it is said, the Kingdom of God is within a man; truly, upon this Scripture of the Kingdom of God being within, those that are learned, if they would but look into that Comment upon the Gospel that we have of a learned man, they shal find a very strange conceit that he hath about this very Text, he confesses indeed it is inutterable; and so indeed it is: *The Kingdom of God is within you*: he makes it that there is such a presence of God and Christ within the soul of a man, that when the body dies (he saith) that the soul goes into God and Christ that is within him; the Souls going into God and Christ, and enjoying of that communion with God and Christ that is within its self, that is Heaven to it (saith he.) He confesses he is not able to express himself, nor others cannot understand fully what he intends; but certainly for the present before death, there is a Kingdom of God within the soul, such a manifestation of God in the soul that is enough to content the heart of a Godly man in the world, the Kingdom that he hath now within him, he shall not stay till afterwards, till he goes to Heaven; but certainly there is a Heaven in the soul of a Godly man, he hath Heaven already: Many times when you go to comfort your friends in their afflictions, you will say,

Heaven

Heaven will pay for al; nay, you may certainly find Heaven pays for al already: there is Heaven within the ſouls of the Saints, that is a certain truth, no ſoul ſhall ever come to Heaven, but that ſoul that hath Heaven come to it firſt. When you die you hope you ſhal go to Heaven: But if you ſhall go to Heaven when you die, Heaven will come to you before you die. Now this is a great Myſterie to have the Kingdom of Heaven in the ſoul, no man can know this but that ſoul that hath it; that Heaven which is within the ſoul for the preſent (I ſay) it is like the white Stone and the new name, that none but thoſe that have it can underſtand it: It is a miſerable condition, my Brethren, to depend upon creatures altogether for our Contentment; you know rich men account it a great happineſs, if they need not go to buy things by the penny as others do, they have al things for pleaſure or profit upon their own ground, and all their inheritance lyes entire together, they have no body comes within them, but they have all within themſelves, there lies their happineſs: whereas other poorer people are fain to go from one market to another to provide them neceſſaries, but yet great rich men they have Sheep and Beeves, Corn, and Cloathing, and all things elſe of their own within themſelves, and herein they place their happineſs: But this is the happineſs of a Chriſtian that he hath that within himſelf that may ſatisfie him more then all theſe; That place which we have in the firſt of *James*, ſeems to allude to that condition of men that have al their eſtates within themſelves; *James* 1. 4. *But let patience have her perfect work, that we may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing*: the word there uſed ſignifies to have the whole inheritance to our ſelves, not a broken inheritance, but that where al lies within themſelves; as a man that hath not a piece of his eſtate here, and a piece there, but he hath it al lies together; and the heart being patient under afflictions, finds it ſelf to be in ſuch an eſtate as this is, finds his whole inheritance to be together, and all intire within its ſelf. And now ſtill to ſhew this by further ſimilitudes; it is with him being filled with good things, juſt like as it is with many a man that enjoyes abundance of comforts at home at his own houſe, God grants to him a convenient ha-

bitation, a comfortable Yoke fellow, and fine Walks and Gardens, and hath al things at home that he could desire; now this man cares not much for going abroad: other men are fain to go abroad to take the air, but he hath a sweet air at home; and they are faine to go abroad to see friends, because they have railings and contendings at home; many ill husbands will give this reason (if his wife make any moane and complaint of his ill husbandry) of their bad husbandry, and will make that their excuse to go abroad, because they can never be quiet at home. Now we account those men most happy that have al at home; those that have close houses that are unsavoury, and smels ill, they delight to go into the fresh aire; but it is not so with many others, that have those at home; those that have no good chear at home, they are fain to go abroad to friends, but those that have their tables furnished, they had as leive stay at home: So a carnal man, he hath but little Contentment in his own spirit; it is *Austines* similitude, saith he, An il conscience is like a scoulding wife; a man (saith he) that hath an ill conscience he cares not to look into his own soul, but loves to be abroad, and looks into other things, but never looks to himself; but one that hath a good conscience he delights in looking into his own heart, he hath a good conscience within him: And so a carnal heart, because there is nothing but filthyness, a filthy stinke in himself, nothing but vileness and baseness within him, upon this it is that he seeks his Contentment elsewhere: and as it is with a vessel that is ful of Liquor, if you strike upon it, it wil make no great noise; but if it be empty, then it makes a great noise: So it is with the heart, An heart that is ful of grace and goodness within, such a one wil bear a great many strokes and never make any noise; but an empty heart, if that be struck, that will make a noise; those men and women that are so much complaining, and alwaies whining, it is a sign that there is an emptiness in their hearts; but if their hearts were filled with grace they would not make such a noise as now they do. As a man that hath his bones filled with Marrow, and veins filled with good blood, he complains not of cold as others do: so a gracious heart having the Spirit of God within him, and his heart filled with grace, he hath that within

within him that makes him finde Contentment. It is a ſpeech of *Seneca*, Indeed thoſe things that I ſuffer wil be incredibly heavy when I cannot bear my ſelf: but now if I be no burden to my ſelf, if I have al quiet within mine own heart, then I can bear any thing: many men through their wickedneſs they have burdens without, but the greateſt burden is the wickedneſs of their own hearts, they are not burdened with their ſins in a godly way, that would eaſe their burden, but they have ſtil their wickedneſs in the power of it, and ſo they are burdens to themſelves. The diſtempers of mens hearts are mighty burdens to them; many times a godly man hath enough within to content him; Vertue it is content with its ſelfe for to live wel; (It is a ſpeech of *Cicero*, and it is in one of his Paradoxes) It finds enough within its own ſphære for the living happily: but how few are acquainted with this Myſterie? Many think, Oh if I had that that another man hath, how happily and comfortably ſhould I live: Oh but if thou beeſt a Chriſtian whatſoever thy condition be, yet thou haſt enough within thy ſelf. You wil ſay ſuch and ſuch men that have al things, they need not be beholding to any body, you ſhal have many that will labour and take pains when they are young, that they might not be beholding to others, I love to live of my ſelf; now a Chriſtian may do ſo; not that he doth not live upon God (I mean not ſo) but upon that which he hath of God within himſelf, that he can live upon, although he doth not enjoy the comforts that are without himſelf, that is it which I mean, and thoſe that are godly and keep cloſe to God in their communion with him, they underſtand what I meane by this, that a Chriſtian hath ſupply of al his wants within himſelf; and here you may ſee that the ſpirit of a Chriſtian is a precious ſpirit, a godly ſpirit is precious, why? becauſe it hath enough to make him happy within himſelf.

The next thing that the Myſtery of Contentment conſiſts in, is this, *That a gracious heart fetches ſupply of al from the Covenant and ſo comes to have Contentment*: which is a dry thing to a carnal ſpirit, Now there are two things here.

Firſt, he fetches Contentment from the covenant in general, that is, from the great covenant that God hath made with him in Chriſt.

Secondly,

Secondly, From the particular promises that God hath made with him in the Covenant.

First, From the Covenant in general. I'le give you one Scripture for that, it is very remarkable, in the 2 of *Sam.* 23. vers. 5. *Although my house be not so with God, yet he hath made with me an everlasting Covenant, ordered in al things, and sure: for this is al my Salvation, and all my desire, although he make it not to grow.* It is a most admirable Scripture of *David*, that yet had not the Covenant of Grace opened so fully as we have. But yet mark what *David* saith, Although I find not my house so, that is, so comfortably every way as I would, although it be not so, what hath he to content his spirit? saith he, He hath made with me an everlasting Covenant; this is that that helps all: I am not (may some men say) thus and thus with God, I do not find God come in so fully, or it is not with my house and family as I hoped it might be, perhaps there is this or that affliction upon my house; suppose you should have the Plague come into your house, and your house is not safe, and you have not that outward comfort in your house as formerly you had, but can you read this Scripture, and say, Although my house be not so blest with health as other mens houses are, although my house be not so, yet he hath made with me an everlasting Covenant, I am one yet in covenant with God, the Lord hath made with me an everlasting covenant: as for these things in this world, I see they are but momentary, they are not everlasting, I see in a family when al was wel but a week ago, now al is down, and the Plague hath swept away a great many of them, and the rest are left in sadness, and mourning: we see there is no trusting in the things of this world, yet the Lord hath made with me an everlasting covenant ordered in all things: I find disorder in my heart, in my family; but the everlasting covenant, that is ordered in all things; yea, and that is sure: Alack, there is no sureness here in these things, I can be sure of nothing here, especially in these times, we know that a man can be sure of little that he hath, who can be sure of his estate? perhaps some of you here that have lived well and comfortably before, and all was well about you, and you thought your mountaine was strong, but you see within a day or two all taken

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ken away from you, so that there is no sureness in the things of this world: But saith he, the Covenant is sure: what I venture to the Sea that is not sure, but here is an Assurance Office indeed, here is a great Assurance Office for the Saints, & they are not at charge, but only the exercising of Grace, for they may go to this Assurance Office to assure every thing that they venture, either to have the thing it self, or be paid for it: In an Assurance Office you cannot be assured to have the very goods come in that you insured, but if they be lost the Insurers do engage themselves to make it good to you. And this Covenant of grace that God hath made with his people, it is Gods Assurance Office, and the Saints in all their fears may, and ought to go to the Covenant to assure all things to them, to assure their estates, and assure their lives. You wil say, How are they sure, their lives and estates go as wel as others? But God engages himself to make up all: And then mark what follows, *This is all my salvation*; Why *David*, wilt thou not have salvation from thine Enemies and outward dangers, from pestilence and plague? The frame of his spirit is quieted, as if he should say, If that salvation comes, wel and good, I shall praise God for it, but that that I have in the Covenant, that is my salvation, I look upon that as enough: Yea and then further, *This is al my salvation, and al my desire*, Why *David*, is there not somthing else that thou wouldst have besides this Covenant? No saith he, It is al involved in this. Now surely those men or women must needs live contented lives that have all their desires; now saith the holy man here, this is all my desire, *And though he make it not to grow*. But for all this Covenant perhaps you wil not prosper in the world as other men do: True, but I am at a point for that: Though God doth not make my house to grow, I have all my desires.

Thus you see how a Godly heart finds Contentment in the Covenant. Many of you speak of the Covenant of God, and of the Covenant of Grace, but have you found it so effectual to your souls? have you suckt this sweetness from the Covenant and content to your hearts in your sad condition? It is a speciall sign of the truth of Grace in any soul, that when any affliction doth befall him, in a kind of natural way he doth presently repair

repair to the Covenant; just as a Child as soon as ever it is in danger, you shall not need to tel him and say, when you are in danger you must go to your father or mother, nature tels him so: so it is with a gracious heart, as soon as it is in any trouble or affliction there is a new nature that doth carry him to the Covenant presently, and there it finds ease and rest: and if you find that your hearts do thus work, presently to be running to the Covenant, it is an excellent sign of the truth of grace: that is for the general.

But now for particular promises in the Covenant of Grace. A gracious heart looks upon every promise as coming from the root of the great Covenant of Grace in Christ. Other men look upon some particular promises, that God wil help them in straights and keep them and the like; but they look not upon the connexion of such particular promises, to the root, the covenant of grace: Now Christians do miss of a great deal of comfort they might have from the particular promises in the Gospel, if they would look upon their connexion to the root, the great Covenant that God hath made with them in Christ. Now I remember I spoke a little about that, that in outward promises in the time of the Law, they might rest more upon them than we can in the time of the Gospel. I gave you the reason why we that live in the time of the Gospel cannot rest so fully, for a literal performance of outward promises that we meet withall in the old Testament, as they might in the time of the Law: for there was a special Covenant that God pleased to cal a new Covenant by way of distinction from the other Covenant that is made with us in Christ for eternal life: And so even the Law was given them in a more peculiar way for an external Covenant of outward blessings in the Land of *Canaan*, and so God did deal with them in a more external Covenant than he doth now with his people. Yet godliness hath the promise of this life; and that which is to come. We may make use of the promises for this life, but yet not so much to rest upon the literal performance of them as they might; but that God wil make them good some way or other, in a spiritual way, if not in an outward way. We must lay no more upon outward promises then this, and therefore if we will lay

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more we make the Promise to bear more than it wil bear out. For to give some instance; To beleeve fullie and confidently, that the Plague shal not come nigh such a house, (I say) it is to lay more upon such a promise than it wil bear. I opened that promise in *Psal.* 91. Now if I had lived in the time of the Law, perhaps I might have been somwhat more confident of the literal performance of the promise than I can now in the time of the Gospel, the promise now bears no more than this, That God hath a special protection over his People, and that he wil deliver them from the evil of such an affliction; and if he doth bring such an affliction, it is more than an ordinary providence. T'is some special providence that God hath in it. I had thought to have given you divers promises for the Contentment of the heart in the time of affliction: *Isa.* 43. 2. *When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee, and through the rivers, they shal not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burnt, neither shal the flame kindle upon thee.* Certainly though this promise was made in the time of the Law, yet it wil be made good to al the Saints now, one way or other, either in the Letter, or some other way. For so we find it plainly, that promise that was made to *Joshua, I wil not fail thee nor forsake thee, Josh.* 1. 5. It's applied to the Christians in the time of the Gospel. So that here is the way of faith in bringing Contentment by the Promises, that al the Promises that ever were made to our forefathers, from the begining of the world, the Saints of God have an interest in them, they are their inheritances, and so goes on from one generation to another and by that they come to have Contentment, because they do inherit all the promises made in all the Book of God; So *Heb.* 13. 5. shews plainly, that it is our inheritance, and we do not inherit less now than they did in *Joshua's* time, but we inherit more, for you shall find in that place of the *Hebrews*, there is more said than is to *Joshua*; to *Joshua* God saith, He will not leave him, nor forsake him; now in that place of the *Hebrews* in the Greek there is five negatives, *I wil not, not, not, not, not*, againe there is the elegancie of it very much, in the Greek I say there is five negatives in that little sentence; as if God should say, I will not leave you, no, I will not, I wil not, I will not

with such earnestness five times together: So that we have not only the same promises that they had, but we have them more enlarged and more full, though still not so much in the literal sence, for that indeed is the last part of the promise, In *Isa*, 54. 17. there God made a promise, *that no weapon formed against his people should prosper, and every toung that shall rise against them in judgment thou shalt condemn*, (& mark what follows.) *this is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, & their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord*: This is a good promise for Soldiers, though still not to lay too much upon the literal sence: True it holds forth thus much, that Gods protection is in a speciall manner over Soldiers that are godly, *And every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment, thou shalt condemn*: and this is against false witness too: Oh you, that your friends never left you any thing, you will say, my friends died and left me not a groat but I thank God, God hath provided for me; but though thy father or mother died and left thee no heritage, yet thou hast a heritage in the promise, *This is their heritage*. So that there's no godly man or woman, but is a great Heir. Therefore when thou lookest into the Book of God and findest any Promise there, thou maiest make that thine own. Just as an Heir that rides over divers fields and meadows, saith he, This meadow is my heritage, and this Corn-field is my heritage; and then he sees a fair house, and saith he, this fair house is my heritage; and he looks upon them with another manner of eye than a stranger that shall ride over those fields. So a carnal heart reads the Promises, and reads them but meerly as stories, not that they have any great intereſt in them: But a godly man every time he reads the Scriptures (remember this Note when you are reading the Scripture) and there meeteth with a Promise, he ought to lay his hand upon it, and say, this is a part of my heritage, it's mine, and I am to live upon it, and this will make you to be contented. Here's a Mysterious way of Contentment, So in *Psal.* 34. 10. and 37. 6. there's divers other Promises that brings Contentment. In *Isa.* 58. 10. And thus much for the Mystery of Contentment by way of the Covenant.

There is two or three things more that shew how a Godly man

man hath Contentment after another kind of way than any Carnal heart in the world hath, it's a Myſterious way, as thus.

He hath Contentment by realliziug the glorious things of Heaven to him, he hath the Kingdom of Heaven as preſent, and the glory that is to come, by faith he makes it as preſent. So the Martyrs they had Contentment in their ſufferings, for ſaid ſome of them, Though we have but a hard breakfaſt, yet we ſhall have a good dinner, we ſhal preſently be in Heaven, do but ſhut your eyes (ſaith one) and you ſhal be in Heaven preſently. 2 *Cor.* 4. 16. *We faint not* (ſaith the Apoſtle) Why? *Becauſe theſe light afflictions that are but for a moment, worke for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.* They ſee Heaven before them and that contents them. You Marriners when you can ſee the Haven before you, though you were mightily troubled before you could ſee any Land, yet when you come nigh the ſhore and can ſee a land-mark, that contents you exceedingly; a godly man in the midſt of the waves and ſtorms that he meets withal, he can ſee the Glory of Heaven before him and ſo contents himſelf; one drop of the ſweetneſs of Heaven is enough to take away all the ſour and bitter of all the afflictions in the world: Indeed here we know that one drop of ſour, or one drop of gall wil make bitter a great deal of honey, put a ſpoonfull of Sugar into a cup of gall or wormwood, that will not ſweeten it, but if you put a ſpoonfull of gall into a cup of Sugar it will imbitter that; now it's otherwiſe in Heaven, one drop of ſweet will ſweeten a great deal of ſour affliction, but a great deal of ſour and gall will not imbitter a ſoul that ſees the glory of Heaven that is to come: now a carnal heart hath no Contentment but from what he ſees before him in this world, but a godly heart hath Contentment from that that he ſees laid up for him in the higheſt Heavens.

The laſt thing that I would name is this, *A godly man hath Contentment by opening and letting out of his heart to God:* other men or women they are diſcontented, but how do they help themſelves? by railing, by ill language, ſuch an one croſſes them, and they have no way to help themſelves but by railing, and by bitter words, and ſo they eaſe themſelves that way when they

are angry, but a godly man when he is croſt, how doth he eaſe himſelf? he is ſenſible of his croſs as well as you, and he goes to God in Prayer, and there opens his heart to God, and lets out his ſorrows and fears, and then can come away with a joyfull countenance; now do you find that you can come away from prayer and not look ſad? As it's ſaid (in 1 *Sam.* 1. 18.) of *Hannah*, that when ſhe had been at prayer her countenance was no more ſad, there ſhe was comforted; and this is the right way of Contentment. Thus we have done with the Myſtery of Contentment. Now if you can put theſe things together that we have ſpoken of, you may ſee fully what an Art Chriſtian Contentment is; *Paul* had need learn it; you ſee Contentment is not ſuch a poor buſineſs as many make it, to ſay you muſt be content &c. But it is a great Art and Myſtery of Godlineſs to be contented in the way of a Chriſtian, and it will appear yet further to be a Myſtery, when we come to the Third Head; and that's to ſhew what thoſe leſſons are that a gracious heart doth learn when it learns to be contented, I have learn'd to be contented: *Learn'd*, What Leſſons have you learn'd? As now A Scholar that hath great learning and underſtanding in Arts and Sciences, how did he begin it? he began (as we uſe to ſay) his A B C. and then afterwards he came to his Teſtament, and Bible, and Accidence, and ſo to his Grammar, and afterwards to his other Books; ſo he learn'd one thing after another: So a Chriſtian coming to Contentment is as a Scholar in Chriſts School, and there are divers Leſſons to teach the ſoul to bring it to this learning: every godly man or woman is a Scholar, it cannot be ſaid of any Chriſtian that he is illiterate, but he is literate; a learned man, a learned woman: now the leſſons that Chriſt teaches, to bring us to Contentment, are theſe:

The firſt great Leſſon is, The leſſon of *Self-denial*: and though it be a great and hard leſſon; as you know a Child at firſt cries, It's hard, It's that that I remember *Bradford* the Martyr ſaith, *Whoſoever hath not learned the Leſſon of the Croſs, hath not learned his A B C in Chriſtianity.* Here Chriſt begins with his Scholars, yea thoſe in the loweſt form muſt begin with this; if you mean to be Chriſtians all, you muſt buckle to this or you

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can never be Christians: There is none can be a Scholar except he doth learn his *A B C*: so thou must learn the lesson of self-deniall or thou canst never come to be a Scholar in Christs School, to be learned in this Mystery of contentment: That is the first Lesson that Christ teaches any soul: Oh self-denial, that brings contentment, that brings down and softens a mans heart: a thing (you know) that is soft, if you strike upon it, it makes no noise, but if you strike upon a hard thing it makes a noise; so the hearts of men that are full of themselves, and hardened with self love, if they have any stroke they make a noise; but a self denying Christian yeilds to Gods hand, and makes no noise; as when you strike upon a Wool-sack it makes no noise, because it yeilds to the stroke; so a self-denying heart yeilds to the stroke, and thereby comes to this contentment. Now in this Lesson of self-deniall there are divers things: I wil not enter into the doctrine of self-denial, but only shew you how Christ teaches self-denial, and how that brings Contentment.

First, *Such a one learns to know that he is nothing*; he comes to this, to be able to say, Wel, I see I am nothing in my self, now that man or woman which indeed knows that he or she is nothing; and hath learned it throughly, will be able to bear any thing: The way to be able to bear any thing, is to know our selves to be nothing in our selves. Saith God to us, *Wilt thou set thine heart upon that which is nothing?* Prov. 23. 5. speaking of riches; why blessed God, dost not thou do so? thou hast set thy heart upon us, and yet we are nothing. God would not have us set our hearts upon riches because they are nothing, and yet God is pleased to set his heart upon us, and yet we are nothing, that is Gods Grace, free grace, and therefore it is no great matter what I suffer, for I am as nothing.

Secondly, *I deserve nothing*. I am nothing, and I deserve nothing; suppose I have not this and that that others have, I am sure I deserve nothing except it be Hell; you will answer any of your servants so that is not content, I marvel what you deserve? or your Children, Do you deserve it, that you are so eager upon it? you think to stop their mouths thus; so we may easily stop our own mouths, we deserve nothing, and therefore why should we be impatient if we have not what we desire

if we had deserved any thing, we might have some trouble of spirit, as a man that hath deserved wel of the State, or of his friends, and he finds not answerable encouragement, it troubles him mightily, but if he be conscious to himself that he hath deserved nothing, he is content with a repulse.

Thirdly, *I can do nothing. Without me you can do nothing.* saith Christ *Joh.* 15. 5. Why should I stand much upon it to be troubled and be discontented if I have not this or that, when the truth is, I can do nothing? If you should come to one that is angry because he hath not such diet as he desires, and is discontented with it, you wil answer him, I marvel what you do, what use you are of? Shall one that wil sit stil and be of no use? yet for all that he must have all his supply that possible he can desire? Do but consider of what use you are in the world; if you consider what little need God hath of you, and what little use you are of, you wil not be much discontented: If you have learned this Lesson of self-denial, though God doth cut me short of such and such comforts, yet since that I do but little, why should I have much? This very thought wil bring down a mans spirit as much as any thing.

Fourthly, *So vile I am, that I can receive no good neither of my self*; I am not only an empty vessel, but a corrupt and unclean vessel that would spoil any thing that comes into it: So are all our hearts, every one of our hearts is not only empty of good, but are like a musty vessel, that if any good liquor be poured into it, it spoils it.

Fifthly, If God doth cleanse us in some measure, and doth put into us some good Liquor, some Grace of his Spirit, yet, *We can make use of nothing neither can we have it, if God doth but withdraw himself*: If God doth but leave us one moment, after he hath bestowed upon us the greatest gifts, and whatsoever abilities we can desire, If God should say, I wil give you them, now go and trade, now I have given you these and these abilities, we cannot stir one foot further neither if God doth but leave us. Doth God give us gifts and parts? Then let us fear and tremble lest God should leave us to our selves, for then how foully should we abuse those gifts and parts? You think other men and women have memory, and gifts, and parts, and you would fain have

have them. But ſuppoſe God ſhould give you theſe, and there leave you, you would utterly ſpoile them.

Sixthly, *We are worſe than nothing.* For by ſin we come to be a great deal worſe than nothing; ſin makes us more vile than nothing, ſin makes us contrary to all good: now it is a great deal worſe to have a contrariety to all that is good, than meerly to have an emptineſſe of all that is good; we are not empty pitchers in reſpect of good, but we are like pitchers filled with poyſon, and it is much for ſuch as we are to be cut ſhort of outward comforts?

In the ſeventh place, *If we periſh, there will be no loſs of us.* If God ſhould annihilate me, what loſs would there be of me? God can raiſe up another in my place, to do him other manner of ſervice than I have done. Now put but theſe ſeven things together and then hath Chriſt taught you ſelf-deniall: I may call theſe the ſeveral words in our Leſſon of ſelf-deniall; Chriſt teaches the ſoul this, ſo that as in the preſence of God upon a real ſight of it ſelf it can ſay, Lord I am nothing, Lord I deſerve nothing, Lord I can do nothing, I can receive nothing, I can make uſe of nothing, I am worſe than nothing, and if I come to nothing and periſh, there wil be no loſs at al of me, and therefore what great matter is it for me to be cut ſhort here? A man that is little in his own eyes, ſuch a man or woman will account every affliction to be little, and every mercy to be great: *Saul*, There was a time (the Scripture ſaith) that he was little in his own eyes, and then his afflictions were but little to him, when ſome would not have had him to be King but ſpake contemptuouſly of him, he held his peace, but when *Saul* began to be big in his own eyes, then the affliction began to be great upon him. *There was never any ſuch contented man or woman as this ſelf-denying man or woman*: There was never any denied himſelf ſo much as Jeſus Chriſt did, he gave his cheeks to the ſmiters, he opened not his mouth, he was as a lamb when he was led to the ſlaughter, he made no noiſe in the ſtreet; Oh he denied himſelf above al, and was willing to empty himſelf; and ſo he was the moſt contented that ever any was in the world, and the neerer we come to learn to deny our ſelves as Chriſt did, the more contented ſhal we be, and by knowing much of our own vileneſs, we come to

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learne to justifie God, whatever the Lord shal lay upon us, yet righteous is the Lord, for he hath to deal with a most wretched creature. A discontented heart he is troubled because he hath no more comfort; but one that is a self-denying man he rather wonders that he hath so much as he hath: Oh saith one, I have but a little: I, but saith he that hath learned his lesson of self-denyal, I rather wonder that God bestows upon me the liberty of breathing in the air, knowing how vile I am, and knowing how much sin the Lord doth see in me: and that is the way of contentment, by learning self-denial.

Eightly, There is a further thing in self denial which brings contentment. *Because thereby the soul comes to rejoyce and take satisfaction in al Gods wayes,* (I beseech you observe this) If a man be selfish and have self love prevail in his heart, those things that suits with his own ends he wil be glad of them; but a godly man that hath denied himself he will suit with, and be glad of al things that shal suit with Gods ends: Saith a Gracious heart, Gods ends are my ends; and I have denyed mine owne ends, and so he comes to find contentment in al Gods ends and wayes, and his comforts are multiplied, whereas the comforts of other men are single, it is but very rare that Gods ways shal suite with a mans particular ends, but alwaies Gods wayes suit with his own ends; now if you wil only have contentment when Gods wayes suit with his own ends, you can have it but now and then, but a self-denying man denies his own ends and only looks at the ends of God, and therein is contented: When a man is selfish he cannot but have a great deal of trouble and vexation, for if I regard my self, my ends are so narrow that I shall have a hundred things wil come and justle me, and I cannot have roome in those narrow ends of mine own; as you know in the City what a deal of stirr there is in the narrow streets, as *Thames* street being so narrow they justle and wrangle and fight one with an other because the place is so narrow, but now in the broad streets there they can go quietly; so men that are selfish, they meet and so justle one with another, one man is for self in one thing, and another man is for self in another thing, and so they make a great deal of stir; but those whose hearts are inlarged and make publick things their ends, and can deny themselves,

themselves, they can walk at breadth and never justle one with another so as the other do. The lesson of self-denial is the first Lesson that Jesus Christ doth learn men in the seeking of Contentment.

The second Lesson is, *The vanity of the Creature*: That is, the second Lesson in Christs School that he teaches those that he would make Scholars in this Art: The vanity of the Creature, That whatsoever there is in the Creature hath an emptiness in it, *Vanity of vanities all is vanity*; that is the lesson that the Wise man learned, that the creature in its self can do us neither good nor hurt, but it is all but as a wind, there is nothing in the creature that is sutable to a gracious heart to feed upon for the good and happiness of it: My Brethren, the reason why you have not Contentment in the things of the world, it is not because you have not enough of them, that is not the reason, but the reason is, because they are not things proportionable to that immortal soul of yours that are capable of God himself; many men think when they are troubled and have not Contentment, that it is because they have but a little in the world, and if they had more, then they should be content: That were just thus, Suppose a man is an hungry, and to satisfie his craving stomach he should gape and hold open his mouth, to take in the wind, and then should think the reason why he is not satisfied, is, because he hath not enough of the wind; no, the reason is, because the thing is not sutable to a craving stomach; Truly there is the same madness in the world; the wind that a man takes in by gaping, wil assoon satisfie a craving stomach which is ready to famish, as al the comforts in the world can satisfie a soul that knows what true happiness means. You would be happy, and you seek after such and such comforts in the creature; wel, have you got them? do you find your heart satisfied as having that happiness that is sutable to you? No, no, it is not here, but you think it is, because you want such and such things: O poor deluded man! It is not because you have not enough of it, but because it is not the thing that is proportionable to that immortal soul that God hath given you. *Why do you lay out your money for that which is not bread* (Esa. 55.2.) *and your labor for that which satisfieth not?* You are mad people, you seek to satisfie

your ſtomachs with that that is not bread, you follow the wind, you wil never have Contentment, al the Creatures in the world ſay, Contentment is not in us, riches ſaith Contentment is not in me, pleaſure ſaith Contentment is not in me, if you look for Contentment in the creature you wil fail; No, Contentment is higher: when thou comeſt into the School of Chriſt, Chriſt teaches thee that there is a vanity in al things in the world, and the ſoul that by coming into the School of Chriſt, by underſtanding the glorious myſteries of the Goſpel comes to ſee the vanity of al things in the world, that is the ſoul that comes to true Contentment. I could tel you of abundance of ſentences from Heathens that ſhews the vanity of al things in the world, and yet they did not learn the vanity of the creature in the right School. But now when a ſoul comes into the School of Jeſus Chriſt, and there comes to ſee a vanity in al things in the world, then ſuch a ſoul comes to have Contentment. If you ſeek Contentment elſewhere, you do like the unclean ſpirit, ſeek for reſt but find none.

A Third Leſſon that Chriſt teaches a Chriſtian when he comes into his School, is this: *He learns him to underſtand what that One thing is that is neceſſary, which he never came to underſtand before*: you know what he ſaith to *Martha*, O Martha, *thou cumbreſt thy ſelf about many things, but there is one thing neceſſary.* The ſoul before ſought after this and the other thing, but now ſaith the ſoul, I ſee really that it is not neceſſary that I ſhould be rich, but it is neceſſary that I ſhould make up my peace with God: it is not neceſſary that I ſhould live a pleaſurable life in this world, but it is abſolutely neceſſary that I ſhould have pardon of my ſin; it is not neceſſary that I ſhould have honor & preferment, but it is neceſſary that I ſhould have God to be my portion, and have my part in Jeſus Chriſt; it is neceſſary that my ſoul ſhould be ſaved in the day of Jeſus Chriſt: the other things are pretty fine things indeed, and I ſhould be glad if God would give them me, a fine habitation, and comings in, and cloathes, and promotion for my wife and children, theſe are comfortable things, but theſe are not the neceſſary things, I may have theſe and yet periſh for ever, but the other is abſolutely neceſſary; no matter though I be poor ſo be it I may have that that is abſo-

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lutely necessary; thus Christ instructs the soul. There is many of you have had some thoughts about this that it is indeed necessary for you to provide for your soul, but when you come into Christs School, there Christ causes the fear of eternity to fall upon you, and there he causes such a real sight of the great things of eternity and the absolute necessity of those things, that possesses your hearts with fear, and that takes you off from al other things in the world. Now I should have shewn you how that wil bring Contentment to the soul when it comes to be instructed in the thing that is absolutely necessary, but thus much for this time.

SERMON V. *at* Stepney. Aug. 24. 1645.

PHIL. 4. 11.

For I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.

I Mentioned three Lessons the last time, that Christ teaches those Scholars that come into his School whereby they might come to get Contentment.

First, The Lesson of Self-denial.

Secondly, The Lesson of the vanity of the creature.

Thirdly, the right understanding of that One thing that is Necessary. A little to enlarge this one, and so to proceed to others.

It is said of *Pompey*, that when he was to carry corn to *Rome* in time of dearth, he was in a great deal of danger by storms at Sea, but saith he, We must go on, it is necessary that *Rome* should be releived, but it is not necessary that we should live. So it would be certainly when the soul is once taken up with the things that are of absolute necessity, it wil not be much

troubled about other things. What are the things that do disquiet us here, but some By matters in this world? and it is, because our hearts are not taken up with that one Absolute Necessary thing: Who are the men that are most discontented, but idle persons, persons that have nothing to take up their minds, every little thing disquiets and discontents them? But now a man that hath business of great weight and consequence, if al things goe wel with his great business that is in his head, he is not sensible of meaner things in the family; but now a man that lies at home and hath nothing to do, he finds fault with every thing: So it is with the heart; when the heart of a man hath nothing to do but to be busie about Creature comforts, every little thing troubles him; but now, when the heart is taken up with the weighty things of Eternity, the great things of eternal life, the heart being taken up with them, these things that are here below, that did disquiet it before, are things now of no consideration with him in comparison to the other, so as how things fal out here is not much regarded, with him, if the *One thing that is Necessary be provided for.*

The fourth Lesson that the soul is instructed in to come to this knowledg in the Art of Contentment, is this: *The soul comes to understand in what relation it stands in here to the world*: by that I mean thus, *God comes to instruct the soul effectually through Christ by his Spirit, upon what terms it lives here in the world, in what relation it is that it doth stand*: as thus, While I live in the World my condition is to be but a pilgrime, a stranger a traveller, and a souldier: Now the right understanding of this, and being taught this, not only by rote, that I can speak the words over, but when I come indeed to have my soul possest with the consideration of this Truth, That God hath set me in this world, not as in my home, but as a meer stranger & a pilgrime, that I am travelling here to another home, & that I am here a souldier in my warfare; it is a mighty help to Contentment in whatsoever befals one: as now to instance in al these conditions, When a man is at home, if he hath not things according to his desire he will be finding fault, and is not contented; but if a man travels abroad, perhaps he meets not with conveniences as he desires, the servants in the house are not at his beck, or are not so

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diligent as his own ſervants were, and his diet is not as at home, and his bed not as at home, yet this very thought may moderate a mans ſpirit, I am a Traveller, and I muſt not be finding fault, I am but in another mans houſe, and it were not manners for one to find fault when he is abroad in another bodies family, though things be not ſo as in my own family; If a man meets with ill weather he muſt be content; it is Travellers fare (we uſe to ſay) both fair weather and foul weather, this is the common Travellers fare, and we muſt be content with it; but if a man were at home and it ſhould drop down in his houſe, he would account it an ill thing, an affliction to him, and he cannot bear it: but when he is travelling abroad though he meet with rain and ſtorms he is not ſo much troubled: When you are abroad at Sea, though you have not thoſe many things that you have at home, you are not troubled at it, you are contented; why? you are abroad at Sea, you are not troubled at ſtorms that do ariſe, and though you have many things otherwiſe than you would have them at home, but ſtill you are quieted with that, you are at Sea. Marriners when they are at Sea they care not what cloaths they have then, though they be pitch'd and tar'd, and but a clout about their necks, and any mean cloaths, but they think when they come home, then they ſhal have thir fine ſilk ſtockings, and brave ſuites, & lac'd bands and ſuch things, and ſhal be very fine; and ſo they are contented abroad upon that thought, that it ſhall be otherwiſe with them when they come home, and though they have nothing but ſalt meat, and a little hard fare, yet when they come to their houſes then they ſhall have any thing: Thus it ſhould be with us in this world: the truth is, we are al in this world but as Sea-faring men, toſt up and down on the waves of the Sea of this world, and our Haven is Heaven, and we are here travelling, but our home it is another world, that long home. Indeed ſome men have better accommodations than others have in travelling: it's true, it's a great mercy of God to us in *England* in that we can travel with ſuch delight and accommodations more than they can in other Countries; and through Gods mercy we have as great accommodation in our travelling to Heaven in *England* as any place under Heaven hath, but yet

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though we do meet with travellers fare sometimes, yet it should not be grievous to us: The Scripture tells us plainly that we must behave our selves here but as pilgrims and strangers. In 1 *Peter*, 2.11. *Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers & pilgrims abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul*: Consider what your condition is, you are pilgrims and strangers, do not think to satisfie your selves here. A man when he comes into an Inn, If there be a fair cupbord of plate he is not troubled that it is not his own, Why? Because he is going away; so let us not be troubled when we see other men have great estates, but we have not, Why? we are going away, into another Country, you are lodging here but as it were for a night, if you should live an hundred yeers in comparison of eternitie, it is not so much as a night, it is but as you were travelling, and were come into an Inn: And were not this a madness for a man to be discontent because he hath not what he sees there, seeing it may be he is to go away again within half a quarter of an hour? So you find it in *David*, this was the argument that brought off *Davids* heart from the things of this world, and set him upon other manner of things, *Psal.* 119. 19. *I am a stranger in the earth, hide not thy Commandements from me*: I am a stranger in the earth, (what then) then Lord let me have the knowledg of thy Commandements and it's sufficient, as for the things of the earth I stand not upon them whether I have much or little, but hide not thy Commandements from me, Lord let me know the rule that I should guide my life by.

Again, We are not only Travellers but Soldiers, this is the condition of the life in which we are here in this world, and therefore we are to behave our selves accordingly. So the Apostle makes use of this argument in writing unto *Timothy*, 2 *Tim.* 2. 3. *Thou therefore endure hardness as a good Soldier of Jesus Christ*. The very thought of the condition of a man that is a Soldier, doth stil his disquiet of heart: when he is abroad, he hath not that accommodations in his quarters as he hath in his own familie; perhaps a man that had his bed warm and curtains drawn about him, and al accommodations in his chamber; now perhaps sometimes he must be put to lie upon straw, and he thinketh with himself, I am a Soldier and it is sutable to my condition

dition: he must have his bed warm'd at home, but he must lie abroad in the fields when he is a Soldier; and the very thought of this condition in which he stands quiets him in all things, yea, and he goes rejoycing, to think, this is but suitable to my condition in which God hath put me: so it should be with us in respect of this world. Now, would it not be an unseemly thing to see a Soldier go whining up and down with the finger in the eye, and complaining, that he hath not hot meat every meal, and his bed warm'd as he had at home; Now Christians they know that they are in their warfare, they are here in this world fighting and combating with the enemies of their souls and eternal condition, and they must be willing to endure hardness here. The right understanding of this, that God hath put them into such a condition, it is that that will content them, especially when they consider that they are certain of the victory, and that ere long they shal triumph with Jesus Christ, and then al their sorrows shal be done away, and their tears wiped from their eyes. A Soldier is content to endure hardness, though he knows not that he shal have the victory? but a Christian knows himself to be a Soldier, and knows that he shal conquer and triumph with Jesus Christ to al eternity. And that's the Fourth Lesson that Christ doth teach the soul when he brings it into his School, to learn the Art of Contentment, he makes him understand throughly the relation in which he hath placed him in, in this world.

The Fifth Lesson that Christ teaches, it is this, *He teacheth us wherein consists any good that is to be enjoyed in any creature in the world.* It's true, before it hath been taught that there is a vanity in the Creature; that is, take the Creature considered in it's self, but yet though there be a vanity in the Creature in it's self, in respect of satisfying the soul for its portion, yet there is some goodness in the Creature, though there be a vanity, there is some desirableness: But wherein doth that consist? It consists not in the nature of the Creature it self, for that is nothing but vanity; but it consists in the reference it hath to the first being of al things. This is a Lesson that Christ teaches, If there be any good in an estate, or in any comforts in this world, it is not so much that it pleases my sense, that it is suitable to

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my body, but the reference it hath to God the First being, that by these creatures there should be somwhat of Gods Goodness conveyed to me, and I may have a sanctified use of the creature to draw me neerer to God, and that I enjoy more of God, and be made more serviceable for the Glory of God in the place where God hath set me, here's the good of the Creature; Oh were we but instructed in this Lesson, did we but understand, and throughly beleeve this to be a truth, that there is no creature in all the world hath any goodness in it any further than it hath reference to the first infinite Supream Good of all, that so far as I can enjoy God in it, so far it is good to me, and so far as I do not enjoy God in it, so far there is no goodness in any thing that I have in the creature: how easie were it then for one to be contented; As thus, Suppose a man had a great estate but a few years ago, and now it is all gone, I would but appeal to this man, When you had your estate wherein did you account the good of that estate to consist? a carnal heart would say, any body might know that; that it brought me in so much a year, and that I could fare of the best, and be a man of repute in the place where I live, and men would regard what I said, I might be cloathed as I would, and lay up portions for my children, in this consisted the good of my estate; this man now never came into the School of Christ to know wherein the good of an estate did consist, no marvail if he be disquieted when he hath lost his estate: But now a Christian that hath been in the School of Christ, and hath been instructed in the Art of contentment, when such a one hath an estate, he thinks, in that I have an estate above my brethren, in this consists the good of it to me, in that I have an opportunity to serve God the better, and I enjoy a great deal of Gods mercy to my Soul conveyed to me through the creature, and hereby I am enabled to do a great deal of good, and therein I account the good of my estate. Now God hath taken this away from me; now if God will be pleased to make up the enjoyment of himself another way; that is, will call me to honor him by suffering, and if I may do God as much Service now in my way of suffering, that is, to shew forth the Grace of his Spirit in the way of my suffering as I did in the way of prosperity, I

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have as much of God as I had before ; if I may be led to God in my low condition, as much as I was in my prosperous condition, I have as much Comfort and Contentment as I had before.

Object. But you will say, *Its true, If I could honor God in my low estate as much as in my prosperous estate, then it were somwhat ; but how can that be ?*

Answ. You must know, the special honor that God hath from his Creatures in this world, it is, The manifestation of the Graces of his Spirit ; It's true, God hath a great deal of honor when a man is in a publick place, and so he is able to do a great deal of good, To countenance Godliness, and discountenance Sin; but the main thing is, *In our shewing forth the vertues of him that hath called us out of darkness into his marvellous light.* Now if I can say, That through Gods mercy in my affliction I find the Graces of Gods Spirit working as strongly in me as ever they did when I had my estate, I am where I was, yea, I am fully in as good a condition, for I have that good now that I had in my prosperous estate, for I accounted the good of it, but in my enjoyment of God, and honoring of God, and now God hath blest the want of it to stir up the Graces of his Spirit in my Soul, and this is the work that now God calls me to ; and I must account God is most honored when I do the work that he cals me to ; He sets me a work in my prosperous estate at that time, to honor him in this condition : and now he sets me a-work at this time, to honor him in this condition : Now God is most honored, when I can turn from one condition to another, according as he cals me to it : Would you account your selves to be honored by your servants, when you set them about a work that hath some excellency, and they wil go on, and on, and you cannot get them off from it ? Now let the work be never so good, yet if you wil cal them off to another work, you do expect that they should manifest so much respect to you, as to be content to come off from that, though they be set about a meaner work, if it be more sutable to your ends. So, you were in a prosperous estate, and there God called you to some service that you took some pleasure in ; but suppose God saith, I wil use you in a suffering condition, and I wil have you honor me in that way ; now here's the honoring

my body, but the reference it hath to God the First being, that by these creatures there should be somwhat of Gods Goodness conveyed to me, and I may have a sanctified use of the creature to draw me neerer to God, and that I enjoy more of God, and be made more serviceable for the Glory of God in the place where God hath set me, here's the good of the Creature; Oh were we but instructed in this Lesson, did we but understand, and throughly beleeve this to be a truth, that there is no creature in all the world hath any goodness in it any further than it hath reference to the first infinite Supream Good of all, that so far as I can enjoy God in it, so far it is good to me, and so far as I do not enjoy God in it, so far there is no goodness in any thing that I have in the creature: how easie were it then for one to be contented; As thus, Suppose a man had a great estate but a few years ago, and now it is all gone, I would but appeal to this man, When you had your estate wherein did you account the good of that estate to consist? a carnal heart would say, any body might know that; that it brought me in so much a year, and that I could fare of the best, and be a man of repute in the place where I live, and men would regard what I said, I might be cloathed as I would, and lay up portions for my children, in this consisted the good of my estate; this man now never came into the School of Christ to know wherein the good of an estate did consist, no marvail if he be disquieted when he hath lost his estate: But now a Christian that hath been in the School of Christ, and hath been instructed in the Art of contentment, when such a one hath an estate, he thinks, in that I have an estate above my brethren, in this consists the good of it to me, in that I have an opportunity to serve God the better, and I enjoy a great deal of Gods mercy to my Soul conveyed to me through the creature, and hereby I am enabled to do a great deal of good, and therein I account the good of my estate. Now God hath taken this away from me; now if God will be pleased to make up the enjoyment of himself another way; that is, will call me to honor him by suffering, and if I may do God as much Service now in my way of suffering, that is, to shew forth the Grace of his Spirit in the way of my suffering as I did in the way of prosperity, I have

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of God that you can turn this way or that way, as God calls you to it; thus now you having learned this, That the good of the Creature consists in the enjoyment of God in it, and the honoring of God by it, you can be content, because you have the same good that you had before. And that's the Fifth Lesson.

The Sixth Lesson that Christ doth teach the soul that he brings into this School, is this; *He doth instruct such a man or woman in the knowledg of their own hearts*: you must learn this, or you wil never learn Contentment; you must learn to know your own hearts wel, to be good students of your own hearts; you cannot al be Scholars in the Arts and Sciences in the world, but you may al be students in your own hearts; you cannot read in the book (many of you) but God expects that every day you should turn over a leaf in your own hearts; you wil never come to get any skil in this Mistery, except you studie the book of your own hearts: Marriners, they have their books that they study, those that wil be good Navigators; and Scholars they have their books; those that study Logick, they have their books according to that; and those that would studie Rethorick and Phylosophy have their books according to that; and those that study Divinity, they have their books whereby they come to be helped in the Study of Divinity: but a Christian (next to the Book of God) is to look into the book of his own heart, and to read over that, and this wil help you to Contentment these three waies:

1. By the studying of thy heart, thou wilt come presently to *discover wherein thy discontent lies*; when thou art discontented thou wilt find out the root of any discontentment if thou doest studie thy heart wel: many men and women they are discontented, and the truth is they know not wherefore, they think this and the other thing is the cause, but a man or woman that knows their own heart, they wil find out presently where the root of their discontent lies, that it lies in such a corruption, and distemper of my heart, that now through Gods mercy I have found out; It is in this case as it is with a little child that is very froward in the house, if a stranger comes in he doth not know what the matter is, perhaps the stranger wil give the child

Child a Rattle, or a Nut, or such a thing to quiet it, but when the Nurse comes she knows the temper and disposition of the Child, and therefore knows best how to quiet it: So it is here just thus for al the world, when we are strangers with our own hearts we are mightily discontented, and know not how to quiet our selves, because we know not wherein the disquiet lieth: And indeed when we are strangers to our own hearts we cannot tel how to quiet our selves; but if we be very wel versed in our own hearts, when any thing fals out so as to disquiet us, we find out the cause of it presently, and so quickly come to be quiet. So a man that hath a Watch, and he understands the use of every wheel and pin, if it goes amiss he will presently find out the cause of it: but one that hath no skil in a Watch, when it goes amiss he knows not what the matter is, and therefore cannot mend it. So indeed our hearts are as a Watch, and there are many wheels, and windings and turnings there, and we should labor to know our hearts wel, that when they are out of tune we may know what the matter is.

2. This knowledg of our hearts wil help us to Contentment, because by this *We shal come to know what is most sutable to our condition.* As thus, A man that knows not his own heart he thinks not what need he hath of affliction, and upon that he is disquieted; but that man or woman that hath studied their own hearts when God comes with afflictions upon them, they can say, I would not for any thing in the world have been without this affliction, God hath so suted this affliction to my condition, and hath come in such a way, that if this affliction had not come, I am afraid I should have fallen into sin: A poor ignorant man that takes Physick, the Physick works, and he thinks it wil kil him, because he knows not the ill humors that are in his body, and therefore he understands not how sutable the Physick is to him; but a Physitian takes a Purge, and it makes him extreamly sick, saith the Physitian, I like this the better, it doth but work upon the humor that I know is the cause of my disease, and upon that such a man that hath knowledg and understanding of his body, and the cause of his distemper, he is not troubled or disquieted: So would we be if we did but

know the distempers of our own hearts; Carnal men and women they know not their own spirits, and therefore they fling and vex upon every affliction that doth befal them, they know not what distempers are in their hearts that may be healed by their afflictions, if it please God to give them a sanctified use of them.

3. By knowing their own hearts, *they know what they are able to mannage*, and by this meanes they come to be content; the Lord (perhaps) takes away many comforts from them that they had before, or denies them some things that they hoped to have got; now they by knowing their hearts, know this, That they were not able to mannage such an estate, and they were not able to manage such prosperity, God saw it, and (saith a poor soul) I am in some measure convinc'd, by looking into mine own heart, that I was not able to mannage such a condition. A man desires greedily to gripe more perhaps than he is able to mannage, and so undoes himself: As Country men do observe, that if they do ever stock their Land, it will quickly spoyl them; and so a wise Husband-man that knows how much his ground will bear, he is not troubled that he hath not so much stock as others, why? because he knows he hath not ground enough for so great a stock, and that quiets him: So many men and women that know not their own hearts, they would fain have a prosperous estate as others have, but if they knew their own hearts, they would know that they were not able to mannage it: If one of your little Children of three or four years old should be crying for the coat of her that is twelve or fourteen years old, and say, Why may not I have a coat as long as my Sisters? If she had, it would soon trip up her heels, and break her Face; but when the Child comes to understanding she is not discontented because her coat is not so long as her Sisters, but saith, my coat is fit for me, and therein takes content: So if we come to understanding in the School of Christ we wil not cry, Why have not I such an estate as others have? the Lord sees that I am not able to mannage it, and I see it my self by the knowing of mine own heart. You shal have children, if they see but a Knife, they wil cry for it, because they know not their strength, and that they are not able to mannage it, but you know

know they are not able to mannage it, and therefore you wil not give it them, and when they come to ſo much underſtanding as to know that they are not able to mannage it, they wil not cry for it; ſo we would not cry for ſuch and ſuch things if we knew that we were not able to mannage them: when you vex and fret for what you have not, I may ſay to you as Chriſt ſaith, you know not of what Spirit you are of. It was a ſpeech of *Oecolampadius* to *parillus*, ſaith he (when they were ſpeaking about this extream poverty,) *Not ſo poor, though I have bin very poor, yet I would be poorer, I could be willing to be poorer than I am*, for the truth is (as if he ſhould ſay) the Lord knew that that was more ſutable to me, and I knew that my own heart was ſuch, that a poor condition was more ſutable to me than a rich; ſo certainly would we ſay if we knew our own hearts, that ſuch and ſuch a condition is better for me than if it had been otherwiſe.

The ſeventh Leſſon, *Is the burden of a proſperous eſtate.* Such a one that comes into Chriſts School to be inſtructed in this Art, never comes to attain to any great skil in this Art til he comes to underſtand the burden that is in a proſperous eſtate.

Object. You wil ſay, What burden is there in a proſperous eſtate.

Anſw. Yes certainly a great burden, and there needs a great ſtrength to bear it: as men had need have ſtrong brains that can bear ſtrong Wine, ſo they had need of ſtrong ſpirits that are able to bear proſperous conditions, and not to do themſelves hurt; ther's a fourfold burden in a proſperous eſtate. Many men and women look at the ſhine and glittering of proſperity, but they little think of the burden, but ther's a fourfold burden.

1. Ther's *A burden of trouble.* A Roſe hath its prickles; and ſo the Scripture ſaith, *That he that wil be rich, pierceth himſelf through with many ſorrows*, 1 *Tim.* 6. 10. If a mans heart be ſet upon it that he muſt be rich, and he wil be rich; ſuch a man wil pierce himſelf through with many ſorrows; he looks upon the delight and glory of riches that appears outwardly, but he conſiders not what piercing ſorrows he may meet with-

all;

all in them: The conſideration of the trouble in a proſperous condition I have divers times thought of, and I cannot tel by what ſimilitude to expreſs it better, than by traveling in ſome Champion Country, where round about is very fair and ſandy ground, and you ſee there a Town a great way off in a bottom, and you think, O how bravely is that Town ſeated! but when you come and ride into the Town, you ſhal ride through a dirty lane, and through a company of fearful dirty holes, and you could not ſee the dirty lane and holes when you were two or three miles off: ſo ſometimes we look upon the proſperity of men and think ſuch a man lives bravely and comfortably, but if we did but know what troubles he meets withal in his family, in his eſtate, in his dealings with men, we would not think his condition ſo happy, One may have a very fine new ſhoo, but no body knows where it pinches him, but he that hath it on: ſo you think ſuch and ſuch men are happy, but they may have many troubles that you little think of.

2. *There is a burden of Danger in it.* Men that are in a proſperous condition they are in a great deal of danger: you ſee ſometimes in the evening when you light up your Candles, the Moths and the Gnats wil be flying up and down in the Candle but they ſcorch their wings, and there they fal down dead; ſo there is a great deal of danger in a proſperous eſtate, thoſe men that are ſet upon a pinacle on high, theſe men they are in greater danger than other men are. Honey we know doth invite Bees and Waſps unto it; and ſo the ſweet of proſperity doth invite the Devil and Temptation. Men that are in a proſperous eſtate, are ſubject to many temptations that other men are not ſubject to. The Scripture cals the Devil *Beel-zebub*, that is, the God of Files; and ſo *Beel-zebub* comes where the honey of proſperity is: They are in very great danger of temptations that are in a proſperous condition. The dangers of men that are in a proſperous eſtate, that have more than others, ſhould be conſidedered of by thoſe that are lower, think with thy ſelf, Though they be above me, yet they are in more danger than I am; the tall Trees are more ſhattered a great deal than low ſhrubs: ſo you know the ſhip that hath all the ſails up, the top ſail and all, in a ſtorm, this is in more danger than that that hath all the ſails drawn

drawn in: And ſo men that have their Top-gallant, and all up and brave, they are more like to be drown'd, drown'd in perdition than other men are; and therefore you know what the Scripture ſaith, how hard it is for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven: ſuch a text ſhould make poor people to be contented with their eſtates. We have a notable example for that in the Children of *Kohath*, you ſhal find that they were in a more excellent eſtate than the other of the *Levites*, but they were in more danger than the other, and more trouble.

Firſt, That the Children of *Kohath* were in a higher condition than other of the *Levites*, that I'le ſhew you out of the 4th of *Numb.* 4. verſ. there you ſhall find what their condition was. *This ſhall be the ſervice of the ſons of* Kohath *in the Tabernacle of the Congregation about the moſt holy things.* Mark, *the Levites* were exerciſed about *holy things*; but the ſons of *Kohath*, their ſervice was about the *moſt holy things* of al: and you ſhal find in the 21. of *Joſhua*, verſ. 10. That God did honor the ſons of *Kohath* in a more ſpecial manner than he did honor the other *Levites*, which honor the Children of *Aaron* (being of the families of the *Kohathites*, who were of the Children of *Levi*) had, for theirs was the firſt Lot, and they were prefer'd before the other families of *Levi*, thoſe that were imployed in the moſt honorable imployment, they had the moſt honorable Lot, the firſt Lot fel to them: Thus you ſee God honored the Children of the *Kohathites*. But (might other *Levites* ſay) how hath God preferd this family before us? They were honored more than the other were: But now, mark their burden that comes with their Honor, and that I wil ſhew you out of two Scriptures, firſt is, *Num.* 7. 6. 7. 8, 9. *And* Moſes *took the Wagons and Oxen, & gave them unto the* Levites: *Two Wagons and four* Oxen *he gave unto the ſons of* Gerſhom, *according to their ſervice: & four Wagons & eight Oxen he gave unto the ſons of* Merari, *according unto their ſervice, under the hand of* Ithamer *the ſon of* Aaron *the Prieſt.* But ſaith he (verſ. 9.) *Unto the ſons of* Kohath *he gave none; becauſe the ſervice of the Sanctuary that belonged unto them, was, That they ſhould bear upon their ſhoulders.* Mark, the other *Levites* had Oxen and Wagons given unto them, to eaſe them of their ſervice: but (ſaith he) to the ſons of *Kohath* he gave none,

but

but they ſhould bear their ſervice upon their ſhoulders ; and that's the reaſon why God was ſo diſpleaſed, becauſe that they would have more eaſe in Gods ſervice than God would have them ; for whereas they ſhould carry it upon their ſhoulders, they would carry it upon a cart ; Mark here, you ſee the firſt burden that they had, beyond what the other *Levites* had. And thoſe that are under them think not of their burden that they are to carry upon their ſhoulders, when as others have means to eaſe them ; and many times thoſe that are employed in the Miniſtery, or Magiſtracie, that ſit at the Stern to order the great Affairs of the Common-wealth and State, you think they live bravely : They lie awake when you are aſleep ; if you knew the burden that lies upon their ſpirits, you would think that your labour and burden were very little in compariſon of theirs.

2. Ther's another burden of danger more than the reſt, and that you ſhal find in *Numb.* 4. 17. *And the Lord ſpake unto* Moſes *& unto* Aaron *ſaying, Cut ye not off the tribe of the families of* the Kohathites *from among the* Levites, *but thus do unto them that they may live & not die: When they approach unto the moſt holy things,* Aaron *& his Sons ſhal go in & appoint them every one to his ſervice & to his burden ; but they ſhal not go in to ſee when the holy things are covered, leſt they die.* Mark this text: ſaith the Lord to *Moſes* and *Aaron*, Cut ye not off the tribe of the family of the *Kohathites* from among the *Levites*. Cut them not off, why? what had they done? had they done any thing amiſs? No, they had not done any thing that provoked God : but the meaning is this; Take a great care of the family of the *Kohathites* to inſtruct them in their duty that they were to do ; for (ſaith God) they are in a great deal of danger, being to ſerve in the moſt holy things: If they ſhould go in to ſee the holy things more than God would have them, it is as much as their lives are worth, and therefore if you ſhould but neglect them, and not inform them throughly in their duty, they would be undone: Saith God, They are to adminiſter in the moſt holy things, and if they ſhould but dare to preſume to do any thing otherwiſe than God would have them about thoſe ſervices, it would coſt them their lives ; and there

therefore be not you careleſs of them, for if you neglect them you will be a means, of cutting them off. Thus you ſee the danger that the family of the *Kohathites were in*; they were prefer'd before others, but they were in more danger. So you think there are ſuch men in a pariſh that bear the ſway, and are imployed in publick ſervice, and they carry all before them; but you conſider not their danger. And ſo the Miniſters, they ſtand in the fore-front of all the ſpight and mallice of ungodly men: indeed God imploies them in honorable ſervice, and that ſervice that the Angels would take delight in; but though the ſervice be honorable, above the imployment of other works, yet the burden of danger that likewiſe is greater than the danger of men that are in an inferior condition. Now when the Soul comes to get wiſdome from Chriſt to think of the danger that it is in, then it wil be content in that low eſtate in which it is. A poor man that is in a low condition, thinks, I am low, and others are raiſed, but I know not what their burden is: and ſo, if he be rightly inſtructed in the School of Chriſt he comes to be contented.

3. *In a proſperous eſtate there is the burden of Duty.* You look only at the ſweet and comfort that they have, and the honor and reſpect that they have that are in a proſperous condition; but you muſt conſider of the duty that they owe to God: God requires more duty at their hands than at yours; you are ready to be diſcontented that you have not ſuch parts and abilities as ſuch have, but God requires more duty of them that have more parts, God requires more duty of them that have greater eſtates than of you that have not ſuch eſtates, Oh! you would fain have the honor, but can you carry the burden of the Duty?

4. The laſt is, *The burden of Account in a proſperous Eſtate.* There is a great account that they are to give to God that enjoy great eſtates and a proſperous condition: Now we are all Stewards; and one is a Steward to a meaner man, perhaps an ordinary Knight; another is a Steward to a Noble man, an Earl: now the Steward of the meaner man, he hath not ſo much as the other hath under his hand: now ſhall he be diſcontented becauſe there comes not ſo much under his hand as under the

others? No thinks he, I have less, and I am to give the less account: So your account in comparison of the Ministers and Magistrates wil be nothing; you are to give an account of your own Souls, and so are they; but you are to give an account for your own family, and so are they; but you are not to give account for Congregations, and for Towns, and Cities, and Countries. You think of Princes and Kings, Oh! what a glorious condition they are in. But what do you think of a King to give account for all the disorder, and wickedness in a Kingdome that he possibly might have prevented? What abundance of Glory might a Prince bring to God if so be that he bent his soul and all his thoughts to lift up the Name of God in a Kingdom; now what God looses for want of this, that King, Prince, or Governor he must give an account for. It's a speech of *Chrysostome* in that place of the *Hebrews*, where it's said that men must give an account for their Souls, he wonders that any men in publick place can be saved, because their account is so great that they are to give. And I remember I have read a speech of *Philip* that was King of *Spain*, (though the story saith of him, that he had such a Natural conscience, that he profest he would not do any thing against his conscience, no not in secret for the gaining of a world, yet when this man was to die) Oh saith he, that I had never been a King; Oh that I had liv'd a solitary and private life al my daies; then should I have died a great deal more securely, I should with more confidence have gone before the Throne of God to give my account: but here's the fruit of my Kingdom, that I had all the glory of it, it hath made my account to be harder to give to God: and thus he cries out when he was to die. And therefore you that live in private conditions remember this, If you come into Christ's School, and be taught this Lesson, you wil be quiet in your afflictions, or private estate, in regard your account is not so great as others. It's a speech I remember I have met withal in *Latimers* Sermons that he was wont to use, *That the half is more than the whol.* That is, when a man is in a mean condition, he is but half way towards the height of prosperity that others are in: yet saith he, this is more safe though it be a meaner condition than others. Those that are in a high and prosperous condition,

on, there is annexed to it the burden of trouble, and of danger, and of duty, and of account. And thus you see how Christ trains up his Scholars in his School, and though they be weak otherwise, yet by his Spirit he gives them wisdom to understand these things aright.

The eight Lesson is this, *Christ teaches them what a great and dreadful evil it is to be given up to ones hearts desires.* The understanding this Lesson that it is a most dreadful evil, one of the most hideous and fearful evils that can befal any man upon the face of the Earth, for God to give him up to his hearts desires: when the Soul understands this once, and together with it, (for it goes along together) that spiritual Judgments are more fearful than any outward judgments in the world, the understanding of this will teach any one to be content in Gods crossing of them in their desires. Thou art crost in thy desires, now thou art discontented and vext and fretted at it, Is that thy only Misery that thou art crost in thy desires? No no, thou art infinitly mistaken, the greatest misery of all is, for God to give thee up to thy hearts lusts and desires, to give thee up to thine own counsels: so you have it in *Psal.* 81. 11, 12. *But my people would not hearken to my voice, and Israel would none of me,* [what then?] *So I gave them up unto their own hearts lusts, and they walked in their own counsels.* Oh saith *Bernard*, Let me not have such a misery as that is, for to give me what I would have, to give me my hearts desires, it is one of the most hideous judgments in the world for a man to be given up to his hearts desires. We have not indeed in Scripture any certain evident sign of a Reprobate, we cannot say (except we knew a man had committed the sin against the Holy Ghost) that he is a Reprobate, for we know not what God may work upon him; but the neerest of all, and the blackest sign of a Reprobate is this, for God to give up a man to his hearts desires, all the pain of Diseases, all the calamities that can be thought of in the world, are no judgments in comparison of this, for a man to be given up to his hearts desires; now when the Soul comes to understand this, the Soul then cries out, Why am I so troubled that I have not my desires? There is nothing that God conveys his wrath more through than a prosperous Estate.

I remember I have read of a Jewish Tradition that they say of *Uzziah*, when God struck *Uzziah* with a Leprosie, they say that the beams of the Sun was darted upon the forehead of *Uzziah*, and he was struck with a Leprosie with the darting of the beams of the Sun upon his fore-head; the Scripture saith, Indeed the Priests looked upon him; but they say there was a special light and beam of the Sun upon the fore head that did discover the Leprosie to the Priests, and they say it was the way of conveying of it. Whether that were true or no, I am sure this is true, that the strong beams of the Sun of prosperity upon many men makes them to be leprous; Would any poor man in the Country have been discontented that he was not in *Uzziahs* condition? He was a great King, but there was the Leprosie in his fore head; the poor man may say, though I live meanly in the Country, yet I thank God my body is whol and sound, would not any man rather have russet & skins of beasts to cloath him with, than to have sattin and velvet that should have the plague in it? The Lord conveyes the Plague of his curse through prosperity, as much as through any thing in the world, and therefore the soul coming to understand this, this makes it to be quiet and content.

And then, *Spiritual Judgments are the greatest Judgments of all*; the Lord laies such an Affliction upon my outward estate, but what if he had taken away my life? A mans health is a greater mercy than his estate; and you that are poor people you should consider of that; But is the health of a mans body better than his estate? what is the health of a mans soul? that's a great deal better; the Lord hath inflicted external judgments, but he hath not inflicted spiritual Judgments upon thee, he hath not given thee up to hardness of heart, and taken away the spirit of prayer from thee in thine afflicted estate, Oh then be of good comfort though there be outward afflictions upon thee, yet thy soul, thy more excellent part is not afflicted. Now when the soul comes to understand this, that here lies the sore wrath of God, to be given up to a mans desires, and for Spiritual Judgments to be upon a man, this quiets him, and contents him, though outward afflictions be upon him; perhaps one of a mans children hath the fit of an ague, or the tooth-

tooth-ach, but perhaps his next neighbor hath the plague, or all his children are dead of the plague, now shall he be so discontented, because his children have the tooth-ach when his neighbors children are dead? Now think thus, Lord thou hast laid an afflicted condition upon me, but Lord thou hast not given me the plague of a hard heart. Now take these eight things before mentioned, and lay them together, and you may well apply that Scripture in *Isa.* 29 the last verse, saith the text there *They also that erred in Spirit, shal come to understanding; and they that murmured shal learn Doctrine.* Hath there been any of you (as I fear many may be found) that have erred in spirit, even in regard of this truth that now we are preaching of, and many that have murmured, Oh that this day you might come to understand, that Christ would bring you into his School, and teach you understanding, *And they that murmured shal learn Doctrine*: what Doctrine shal they learn? These eight Doctrines that I have opened to you. And if you wil but throughly studie these lessons that I have set before your eyes: It will be a special help and means to cure your murmuring against, and repinings at the hand of God: And so you will come to learn Christian Contentment. The Lord teach you throughly by his Spirit these Lessons of Contentment.

SER.

SERMON VI. *at* Stepney. Aug. 31. 1645.

PHIL. 4. 11.

For I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.

I Shal only ad one Lesson more in learning of Contentment, and then I shal come to the Fourth Head, The Excellency of Contentment.

The Ninth and last Lesson that Christ teaches those that he doth instruct in this Art of Contentment, *It is the right knowledg of Gods Providence*, and therein are these Four things.

1. *The Universality of Providence*, that the soul must be throughly instructed in to come to this Art, to understand the Universality of Providence, that is; how the Providence of God goes through the whol world, extends its self to every thing: Not only that God by his providence doth rule the world, and govern all things in general, but that it reaches to every particular, not only to Kingdoms, to order the great affairs of Kingdoms, but it reaches to every mans Family, it reaches to every person in the Family, it reaches to every condition, yea, to every passage, to every thing that falls out concerning thee in every particular, not one hair falls from thy head, not a Sparrow to the ground without the providence of God. There's nothing befals thee, good or evil, but there is a providence of the Infinite Eternal First-being in that thing, and therein indeed is Gods Infiniteness, that it reaches to the least things, to the least worm that is under thy feet: Then much more it reaches unto thee that art a rational Creature, the Providence of God is more special towards rational Creatures than any others: The understanding in a spiritual

rituall way the universality of providence in every particular passage from morning to night every day; that there's not any thing that doth befal thee, but there's a hand of God in it, it is from God, it is a mighty furtherance to Contentment. Every man will grant the truth of the thing that it is so, but as the Apostle saith in *Heb.* 11. 3. *By faith we understand that the worlds were made*, by faith we understand it; why by faith? we can understand by reason that no finite thing can be from it self, And therefore that the world could not be of it self, but we can understand it by faith in another manner than by reason. So whatsoever we understand of God in way of providence, yet when Christ doth take us into his School we come to understand it by faith in a better manner than we do by reason.

2. *The efficacy that there is in providence*; that is, That the providence of God goes on in al things with strength and power, and it is not to be altered by our power; let us be discontented and vext and troubled, and fret, and rage, yet we must not think to alter the course of providence by our discontent. Some of *Jobs* friends said to him, *Shal the earth be forsaken for thee, and shal the rock be removed out of his place?* Job, 18. 4. when they saw him to be impatient. So I may say to every discontented impatient heart, What, shal the providence of God change its course for thee? Do'st thou think it such a weak thing that because it doth not please thee it must alter its course? Be thou content or not content, the providence of God wil go on, it hath an efficacy of power and vertue, to carry all things before it: Canst thou make one hair black or white with all the stir that thou keepest? When you are in a Ship at Sea that hath all her Sails spread with a full gale of wind, and swiftly sailing; Can you make it stand stil with running up and down in the Ship? No more can you make the providence of God to alter and change its course with your vexing and fretting, but it wil go on with power do what thou canst. Do but understand the power and efficacy of providence and it will be a mighty means for the helping to learn this lesson of Contentment.

3. *The infinite variety of the works of providence*, and yet *the order*

order of things one working towards another; there is infinite variety of the works of God in an ordinary providence, and yet al work in an orderly way; we put these two together, for God in the way of his povidence causes a thousand thousand things one to depend upon another, there are infinite several Wheels (as I may say) in the works of providence, all the works that ever God did from al eternity or ever wil do, put them all together, and all make up but one work, and they have been as several wheels that have had their orderly motion to attain the end that God from al eternity hath appointed: We indeed look at things by pieces, we look at one particular and do not consider the reference that one thing hath to another; but God he looks at all things at once, and sees the reference that one thing hath to another: As a Child that looks upon a Clock, looks first upon one wheel, and then upon another wheel, he looks not at all together, or the dependance that one hath upon another, but the workman hath his eyes upon all together and sees the dependance of all one upon another, and the Art that there is in the dependance of one upon another; so it is in Gods providence. Now observe how this works to Contentment; where there is such a passage of providence befals me, that's one wheel, and it may be if this wheel should be stopt, there might a thousand other wheels come to be stopt by this: as in a Clock, stop but one wheel and you stop every wheel, because they have dependance one upon another: so when God hath ordered a thing for the present to be thus and thus, how do'st thou know how many things do depend upon this thing? God may have some work that he hath to do twenty yeers hence that may depend upon this passage of providence, that fals out this day, or this week. And here (by the way) we may see a great deal of evil that there is in discontent, for thou wouldest have Gods providence altered in such and such a particular, indeed if it were only in that particular, and that had reference to nothing else it were not so much, but by thy desire to have thy will in such a particular, it may be thou wouldest cross God in a thousand things that he hath to bring about, because it's possible there may be a thousand things depend upon that one thing that thou wouldest fain have

have to be otherwiſe than it is; juſt as if a child ſhould cry out and ſay, Let but that one wheel ſtop; though he ſaith but one wheel, yet if that ſtop, it is as much as if he ſhould ſay, they muſt all ſtop: So in providence, let but this one paſſage of Providence ſtop, it is much as if a thouſand ſtopt: Let me therefore be quiet and content, for though I be croſt in ſome one particular God attains his end, at leaſt his end may be furthered in a thouſand things by this one thing that I am croſt in; therefore let a man conſider, this is an act of providence, and how do I know what God is about to do, and how many things depend upon this providence? Now we are willing to ſuffer our friends will to be croſt in one thing, ſo that our friend may attain to what he deſires in a thouſand things: If thou haſt a love and friendſhip to God, be willing to be croſt in ſome few things, that the Lord may have his Work go on in the univerſal, in a thouſand of other things. Now That's the third thing to be underſtood in Gods providence, that Chriſt doth learn thoſe that he teacheth in the Art of Contentment.

4. Chriſt teacheth them the knowledg of Providence, that is, *The knowledg of Gods uſual way in his dealing with his People more particularly.* The other is, The knowledg of God in his Providence in general: But the right underſtanding of the way of God in his providence towards his People and Saints, is a notable Leſſon to help us in the Art of Contentment. If we come once to know a mans way and courſe, we may better ſute and be contented to live with him than before we came to know his way and courſe: As when a man comes to live in a ſociety with men and women, it may be the men and women may be good, but till a man comes to know their way and courſe and diſpoſition, many things may fall very croſs, and we think they are very hard, but when we come to be acquainted with their way and ſpirit, then we can ſute and concur with them very well? and the reaſon of our trouble is, becauſe we do not underſtand their way. So it is with you, thoſe that are but as ſtrangers to God, and do not underſtand the way of God, they are troubled with the providences of God, and they think them very ſtrange and cannot tell what to make of them, becauſe they underſtand not the ordinary courſe and way of

God towards his People. If a ſtranger ſometimes comes into a familie, and ſees ſuch and ſuch things done, he wonders what the matter is, but thoſe that are acquainted with it, it troubles them not at all. So ſervants, when they come firſt together and know not one another, it may be they are froward and diſcontented, but when they come to be acquainted with one anothers waies, then they are more contented: Juſt ſo it is when we come firſt to underſtand Gods waies.

Object. But you will ſay, *What do you underſtand by Gods waies?*

Anſw. By that I mean theſe three things. And when we come to know them, we ſhall not wonder ſo much at the providence of God, but be quiet and contented with them.

1. The firſt thing is this: *Gods ordinary courſe is, That his people in this world ſhould be in an afflicted condition*: God hath revealed in his Word, and we may there find he hath ſet it down to be his ordinary way, even from the beginning of the world to this day, (but more eſpecially in the times of the Goſpel) that his People here ſhould be in an afflicted condition. Now men that do not underſtand this, they ſtand & wonder to hear of the People of God that they are afflicted, and the enemies proſper in their way; for thoſe that ſeek God in his way, and ſeek for Reformation, for them to be afflicted routed and ſpoiled, and the enemies to prevail they wonder at it: But now, one that is in the School of Chriſt, he is taught by Jeſus Chriſt, that God by his eternal Counſels hath ſet this to be his courſe and way, to bring up his People in this world in an afflicted condition, and therefore ſaith the Apoſtle, *Account it not ſtrange concerning the fiery tryal*, 1 *Pet.* 4. 12. We are not therefore to be diſcontented with it, ſeeing God hath ſet ſuch a courſe and way, and we know ſuch is the will of God that it ſhould be ſo.

The Second thing that is in Gods way is this, *Uſually when God intends the greateſt mercy to any of his People, he doth bring them into the loweſt condition.* God doth ſeem to go quite croſs and work in a contray way; when he intends the greateſt mercies to his People, he doth firſt uſuallie bring them into very low conditions, if it be a bodily mercy, an outward mercy that he intends to beſtow, he uſeth to bring them bodily low, and outwardly

wardly low, if it be a mercy in their estates that he intends to bestow, he brings them low in that, and then raises them; and in their names he brings them low there, and then raises them; and in their spirits, God doth ordinarily bring their spirits low and then raises their spirits; usually the People of God before the greatest comfort, have the greatest afflictions and sorrows, now those that understand not Gods waies they think that when God brings his People into sad conditions, that God leaves and forsakes them, and that God doth intend no great matter of good to them; but now a Child of God that is instructed in this way of God, he is not troubled; my condition is very low, but (saith he) this is Gods way when he intends the greatest mercy, to bring men under the greatest afflictions. When he intended to raise *Joseph* to be the Second in the Kingdom, God cast him into a dungeon a little before. So when God intended to raise *David* and set him upon the Throne, he made him to be hunted as a Partridge in the mountains, 1 *Sam.*26. 20. God went this way with his Son; Christ himself went into Glory by suffering, *Heb.* 2. 20. And if God deal so with his own Son, much more with his People; As a little before break of day you shall observe it is darker than it was any time before; so God doth use to make our conditions darker a little before the mercy come. When God bestowed the last great mercy at *Naseby*, we were in a very low condition, God knew what he had to do before-hand, he knew that his time was coming for great mercies; it is the way of God to do so. Be but instructed aright in this course and tract that God uses to walk in; and that wil help us to Contentment exceedingly.

The Third thing that there is in Gods way and course is this, *It is the way of God to work by contraries, to turn the greatest evil into the greatest good.* To grant great good after great evil is one thing, and to turn great evils into the greatest good that's another; and yet that's Gods way, the greatest good that God intends for his People, many times he works it out of the greatest evil, the greatest light is brought out of the greatest darkness: and *Luther* (I remember) hath a notable expression for this, (saith he) it is the way of God, he doth humble

that he might exalt, he doth kill that he might make alive, he doth confound that he might glorifie; this is the way of God (saith he.) but (saith he) every one doth not understand this, this is the Art of Arts, and the Science of Sciences, the knowledge of knowledges to understand this, that God doth use when he will bring life, he doth use to bring it out of death, he brings joy out of sorrow, and he brings prosperity out of adversity, yea, and many times he brings Grace out of Sin, that is, makes use of sin to work furtherance of Grace; it is the way of God to bring good out of evil; not only to overcome the evil, but to make the evil to work towards good: here's the way of God: now when the soul comes to understand this, it will take away our murmuring, and bring Contentment into our spirits: But I fear there are but few that understand it aright, perhaps they read of such things, and hear of such things in a Sermon, but they are not by Jesus Christ instructed in this, that this is the way of God, To bring the greatest good out of the greatest evil.

Thus having dispatcht the Third Head, the Lessons that we are to learn; we come to the Fourth, and that is, *The excellency of this Grace of Contentment*: And there is a great deal of excellency in Contentment; that's a kind of Lesson too for us to learn. And this Head likewise will be somwhat long.

Saith the Apostle, *I have learned.* As if he should say, Blessed be God for this: Oh! it is a mercy of God to me that I have learned this Lesson, I find so much good in this Contentment, that I would not for a world but have it: (I have learned it saith he.)

Now the very Heathens had a sight of a great Excellency that there is in Contentment. I remember I have read of *Antisthenes* a Phylosopher, that desired of his Gods (speaking after the Heathenish way) nothing in this world to make his life happy, but CONTENTMENT; and if he might have any thing that he would desire to make his life happy, he would ask of them, That he might have the spirit of *Socrates*, that he might have such a spirit as *Socrates* had, to be able to bear any wrong, any injuries;

injuries that he met withal, and to continue in a quiet temper of ſpirit whatſoever befel him; for what was the temper of *Socrates*, whatever befel him he continued the ſame man, whatever croſs befel him no body could perceive any alteration of his ſpirit, though never ſo great croſſes did befal him. This a Heathen did attain to by the ſtrength of Nature, and a common work of the ſpirit: Now this *Antiſthener* ſaw ſuch an excellency in this ſpirit: As when God ſaid to *Solomon*, What ſhal I give thee? he asked of God wiſdom: ſo ſaith he, If the Gods ſhould put it to me to know what I would have, I ſhould deſire this thing, that I might have the ſpirit of *Socrates*: he ſaw a great excellency that there was in this. And certainly a Chriſtian may ſee abundance of excellency in it: I ſhal labor to ſet it out to you in this Sermon that you may be in love with this Grace of Contentment.

In the firſt place, *By Contentment we come to give God that Worſhip that is due to him*: It is a ſpecial part of Divine Worſhip that we owe to God, If we be content in a Chriſtian way according as hath been opened to you; I ſay it is a ſpecial part of the Divine Worſhip that the Creature ows to the infinite Creator, in that I do tender that reſpect that is due from me to the Creator. The words that the Greeks have that ſignifies to Worſhip it is as much as to come and crouch before another, as a Dog ſhould come crouching unto you, and be willing to lie down at your feet; ſo the Creature in the apprehenſion of its own baſeneſs, and the infinite Excellency that there is in God above it; when it comes to worſhip God, it comes and crouches to this God, and it lies down at the feet of God, then doth the Creature worſhip God. When you ſee a dog come crouching to you, and you can make him with holding your hand over him to lie down at your feet; then conſider, thus ſhould you do before the Lord, you ſhould come crouching to him, and lie down at his feet even upon your backs or bellies, to lie down in the duſt before him, ſo as to be willing that he ſhould do with you what he wil; as ſometimes you may turn a dog this way and that way up and down with the hand, and there he lies before you, according to your ſhewing him with your hand: So when the Creature ſhall come and lie down thus before

See this opened at large in Goſpel-Worſhip *on Levit.* 10. 3.

fore the Lord, then a Creature worships God, doth tender up that worship that is due to God. Now in what disposition of heart do we thus crouch to God more, then when we have this Contentation in all conditions that God disposeth us unto? This is a crouching unto Gods dispose, to be like the poor woman of *Canaan*, when Christ said, it is not fit to give Childrens meat to dogs, but (saith she) the dogs have crums. I am a dog I confess, I but let me have but a crum, And so when the soul shall be in such a disposition as to lie down and say, Lord, I am but as a dog, yet let me have a crum, then doth it highly honor God. It may be some of you have not your table spread as others have, but God gives you crums; now saith the poor woman, dogs have crums, and when you can find your hearts thus subjecting unto God, to be but as a dog, and can be contented and bless God for any crum, I say, this is a great worship of God, you worship God by this more than when you come to hear a Sermon, or spend half an hour, or an hour in prayer, or when you come to receive a Sacrament; These are the Acts of Gods Worship, I but these are but external Acts of Worship, to Hear, and Pray, and receive Sacraments: But now this is the Soul-worship, to subject it self thus to God. You that often wil-worship God by Hearing, and Praying, and receiving Sacraments, and yet afterwards will be froward and discontented, know, that God regards not that worship, he wil have the Soul-worship in this subjecting of the soul to God. Observe it I beseech you; in active Obedience, there we worship God by doing that that pleases God, but by passive Obedience we do as wel worship God by being pleased with that which God doth. Now when I perform a duty, I worship God, I do what pleases God: why should I not as well worship God when I am pleased with what God doth? As it was said of Christs obedience, Christ was active in his passive Obedience, and passive in his active obedience: So the Saints they are passive in their active obedience; they are first passive in their reception of Grace, and then active: And when they come to passive obedience they are active, they put forth Grace in active obedience, when they perform actions to God, then saith the Soul, Oh! that I could do that that pleases God, when they come

come to ſuffer any croſs, Oh that what God doth might pleaſe me. I labor to do what pleaſes God, and I labor that what God doth ſhall pleaſe me, heres, a Chriſtian indeed that ſhall endeavor both theſe: now this is but one ſide of a Chriſtian, to endeavor to do what pleaſes God, but you muſt as well endeavor to be pleaſed with what God doth, and ſo you ſhall come to be a compleat Chriſtian when you can do both. And that's the firſt thing in the excellency of this Grace of Contentment.

The ſecond thing in opening of this Excellency of Contentment is, *That in Contentment there is much exerciſe of Grace*, There is much ſtrength of Grace, yea there is much beauty of Grace in Contentment, there is much exerciſe of Grace, ſtrength of Grace, and beauty of Grace, I put all theſe together.

1. *Much exerciſe of Grace*, There is a compoſition of Grace in Contentment, there is faith, and there is humility, and love, and there is patience, and there is wiſdom, and there is hope, all Graces almoſt are compounded, it's an oyl that hath the ingredients of all kind of graces, and therefore though you cannot ſee the particular Grace, yet in this oyl you have it al; God ſees the Graces of his Spirit exerciſed in a ſpecial manner, and this pleaſes God at the heart to ſee the Graces of his Spirit exerciſed. In ſome one action that you do you may exerciſe ſome one grace eſpecially, but now in Contentment you exerciſe a great many Graces at once.

2. *There is a great deal of ſtrength of Grace in Contentment.* It argues a great deal of ſtrength in the body, the body to be able to endure hard weather and whatſoever falls out, and yet not to be much altered by it; ſo it argues ſtrength of Grace to be content; You that complain of weakneſs of memory, and weakneſs of parts, you cannot do what others do in other things, but have you this gracious Heart-contentment, that hath been opened to you? I know that you have attained to ſtrength of Grace in this, when it is ſo ſpititual as hath been opened to you in the explication of this point. As it is with a mans brain, if a man be diſtempered in his body and hath many obſtructions in his body, hath an ill ſtomach, and his ſpleen

and

and liver obstructed, and yet for all this his brain is not distempered, it is an argument of a great strength of brain, and though there be many ill fumes that rise from his corrupt stomach, yet still his brain is not distempered, but he continues in the free exercise of the use of his reason and understanding; every one may understand that this man hath a very strong brain, that such things shall not distemper him, whereas other people that have a weak brain, if they do not digest but one meals meat the fumes that do arise from their stomachs, do distemper their brain, and make them unfit for every thing, whereas you shall have others that have strong heads, and strong brains, though their stomachs be ill that they do not digest meat, yet still they have the free use of their brain, this argues strength: So it is in a mans spirit, you shall have many that have weak spirits, and if they have any ill fumes, if accidents befal them, you shall presently have them out of temper, but you shall have other men that though things do fume up, yet still they keep in a steady way, and have the use of reason and of other graces, and possess their souls with patience. As I remember it's reported of the Eagle, it's not like other Fowls, other Fowls when they are hungry make a noise, but the Eagle is never heard to make a noise, though it wants food, and it's from the magnitude of his spirit that will not make such complaints as other Fowls wil do when they want food, it is because it is above hunger, and above thirst: So it is an argument of a gracious magnitude of spirit, that whatsoever befals it, yet it is not alwaies whining and complaining so as others are, but goes on still in its way and course, and blesses God and keeps in a constant tenour whatsoever thing befals it: such things as causes others to be dejected, and fretted and vexed, and takes away all the comfort of their lives, it makes no alteration at all in the spirits of these men and women, I say this is a sign of a great deal of strength of Grace.

3. It's *also an argument of a great deal of beauty of Grace* It's a speech that *Seneca* a Heathen once had, saith he, When you go abroad into groves and woods: and there you see the tallness of the trees and their shadows, it strikes a kind of awful fear of a Deity in you, and when you see the vast rivers and fountains,

and

and deep waters that ſtrikes a kind of fear of a God in you, but (ſaith he) do you ſee a man that is quiet in tempeſts, and that lives happily in the midſt of adverſities, why do not you Worſhip that man? He doth think him a man even to be honored that ſhall be quiet and live a happy life though in the middeſt of adverſities. The Glory of God appears here more than in any of his Works? there is no Works that God hath made, the Sun, Moon, and Stars, and all the World Wherin ſo much of the Glory of God doth appear, as in a man that lives quietly in the midſt of adverſity. That was that that convinced the King, when he ſaw the three children could walk in the midſt of the fiery furnace and not to be touched, the King was mightily con v ced by this, that ſurely their God was a great God indeed, and that they were highly beloved of their God that could walk in the midſt of the furnace and not be touch'r, whereas the others that came but to the mouth of the furnace were devoured; ſo when a Chriſtian can walk in the midſt of fiery trials, and not his garments ſinged, but have comfort and joy in the midſt of all (as *Paul* in the ſtocks) can ſing, (that wrought upon the Jaylor:) ſo it will convince men when they ſee the power of Grace in the middeſt of afflictions, ſuch afflictions as would make others to roar under them, yet they can behave themſelves in a gracious and holy manner; Oh! it's the glory of a Chriſtian. It is that that is ſaid to be the glory of Chriſt, (for ſo by Interpreters it is thought to be meant of Chriſt) In *Micah.* 5. 5. *And this man* (the text ſaith) *ſhall be the peace, when the Aſſyrian ſhal come into our Land, & when he ſhal treade in our Pallaces.* This man ſhall be the peace when the Aſſyrian ſhall come into our Land; for one to be in peace when there is no Enemies, it's no great matter, but ſaith the text when the Aſſyrian ſhall come into our Land, then this man ſhall be the peace; that is, when al ſhal be in an hubbub and uproare, yet then this man ſhal be peace That's the tryal of Grace when you find Jeſus Chriſt in your hearts to be peace, when the Aſſyrian ſhall come into the Land. You may think you find peace in Chriſt when you have no outward troubles, but is Chriſt your peace when the Aſſyrian comes into the Land, when the Enemy comes? Suppoſe you ſhould hear the enemy come marching to the City, and had taken

the Works, and were plundering, what would be your peace? Jesus Christ would be peace to the soul, when the enemy comes into the City, and into your houses: If there be any of you that have been where the enemy hath come, What hath been the peace of your souls? That which is said of Christ may be applied to this grace of Contentment, when the *Assyrian*, the Plunderers, the Enemies, when any affliction, trouble, distress doth befal such a heart, then this Grace of Contentment brings peace to the soul; at that time brings peace to the soul, when the *Assyrian* comes into the Land. The Grace of Contentment it's an excellent Grace, there's much beauty, much strength in it; there is a great deal of worth in this Grace, and therefore be in love with it.

The Third thing in the Excellency of Contentment, is this: *By Contentment the soul is fitted to receive mercy, and to do service.* I'le put these two together, Contentment makes the soul fit to receive mercy, and to do service; no man or woman in the world is so fit for to receive the Grace of God, and to do the Work of God, as those that have contented spirits.

1. *Those are fitted to receive mercy from the Lord that are contented*: as now; If you would have a vessel to take in any liquor, you must hold the vessel stil, if the vessel stir and shake up and down you cannot powr in any thing, but you wil bid, hold stil that you may powr it in, and not lose any: So, if we would be the vessels to receive Gods mercy, and would have the Lord powr in his mercy to us, we must have quiet, stil hearts, we must not have hearts hurying up and down in trouble, discontent, and vexing, but we must have still and quiet hearts if we would receive mercy from the Lord: If a Child flings and throws up and down for a thing, you will not give it him then when he cries so, but first you wil have the Child quiet; though perhaps you do intend the Child shall have the thing he cries for, but you will not give it him till he is quiet, and comes and stands still before you, and is contented without it, and then you will give it him: And truly so doth the Lord deal with us, (for our dealings with him are just as your froward Children are with you) as soon as you would have a thing from God, if you have it not you are disquieted presently and all in an uproar (as it were)

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in your spirits: God intends mercy to you, but saith God, you shall not have it yet, I will see you quiet first, and then in the quietness of your hearts, come to me and see what I will do with you. I appeal to you, you that are any waies acquainted with the waies of God, Have you not found this to be the way of God towards you, when you have been troubled for want perhaps of some Spiritual comfort, and your hearts were vext at it, you get nothing from God all this while; but now, if you have got your heart into a quiet frame, and can say, Well, it's fit the Lord should do with us poor Creatures what he will, I am under his feet, and am resolv'd to do what I can to honor him; and let him do with me what he will, I will seek him as long as I live, I will be content with what God gives, and whether he gives or no I will be content; yea, are you in this frame saith God? now you shall have comfort, now I will give you the mercy. A prisoner must not think to get off his fetters by pulling and tearing, he may gall his flesh and rend it to the very bone, certainly he will be unfettered never the sooner, but if he would have his fetters taken off, he must quietly give up himself to some man to take them off. If a beggar after he hath knockt once or twice at the door and you come not, and thereupon he is vext and troubled and thinks much that you let him stand a little while without any thing, you think that this beggar is not fit to receive an alms; but if you hear two or three Beggars at your door, and if you hear them out at your window say, Let us be content to stay, perhaps they are busie, it is fit that we should stay, it's well if we have any thing at last, we deserve nothing at all, and therefore we may well wait a while; you would then quickly send them an alms: So God deals with the heart, when it is in a disquiet way, then God doth not give; but when the heart lies down quietly under Gods hand, then is the heart in a fit frame to receive mercy: *Your strength shall be, to sit stil* saith God; you shal not be delivered from *Babylon* but by your sitting stil.

2. As fit to receive mercy, *so fit to do service*; Oh! the quiet fruits of Righteousness, the peaceable fruits of Righteousness; they indeed do prosper and multiply most when they come to be peaceable fruits of Righteousness. As the Phylosophers say

of every thing that moves, nothing that moves but it moves upon ſomthing that is immoveable; as a thing that moves upon the earth, if the earth were not ſtil it could not move.

Object. The Ships move upon the Sea, and that is not ſtill.

Anſw. But the Seas they move upon that which is ſtill and immoveable, there is nothing moves but it hath ſomething immoveable that doth uphold it: the wheels in a Coach they move up and down, but the axletree that moves not up and down; ſo it is with the heart of man. As they ſay of the Heaven, it moves up and down upon a Pole that is immoveable: ſo it is in the heart of man, if he will move to do ſervice to God he muſt have a ſteady heart within him, that muſt help him to move in the ſervice of God, thoſe that have unſteady diſquiet ſpirits that have no ſtedfaſtneſs at all in them, they are not fit to do ſervice for God, but ſuch as have ſtedfaſtneſs in their ſpirits they are men and women fit to do any ſervice, and that's the reaſon that when the Lord hath any great work for any ſervants of his to do, uſually he doth firſt quiet their ſpirits, he doth bring their ſpirits into a quiet ſweet frame to be contented with any thing, and then he ſets them about imployment.

The fift excellency is this, *Contentment it doth deliver us from abundance of temptations.* Oh the temptations that men of diſcontented ſpirits are ſubject to. The Devil loves to fiſh in troubled waters. That's our proverb of men and women, their diſpoſition is to fiſh in troubled waters, they ſay it is good fiſhing in troubled waters, this is the maxim of the Devil, he loves to fiſh in troubled waters, where he ſees the ſpirits of men and women troubled and vext, there the Devil comes, (ſaith he) there's good fiſhing for me, when he ſees men and women go diſcontented up and down and he can get them alone, then he comes with his temptations, (ſaith he) Will you ſuffer ſuch a thing? take ſuch a ſhifting indirect way, do not you ſee how poor you are, others are brave, you know not what you ſhal do againſt winter, to provide fewel and get bread for you and your children, and ſo he tempts them to unlawfull courſes: this is the ſpecial diſtemper that the Devil faſtens upon, when he

he brings men and women to give up their souls to him, it is upon discontent: That's the ground of all those that have been witches, and so have given up themselves to the Devil, the rise of it hath been their discontent, and therefore it is observable that those the Devil worketh upon to make them witches, usually they are old and melancholly people, and women especially, and those that are of the poorer sort that are discontent at home, their Neighbors trouble them and vex them, and their spirits are weak and they cannot bear it, so upon that the Devil fastens his temptations and draws them to any thing, if they be poor, then he promiseth them money, if they have revengeful spirits, then he tels them that he will revenge them upon such and such persons, now this quiets and contents them. Oh! there's matter of temptation for the Devil where he meets with a discontented spirit. As *Luther* saith of God, God doth not dwell in *Babylon*, but in *Salem*, *Babylon* signifies confusion, and *Salem* signifies peace, now God doth not dwell in spirits that are in a confusion, but he dwels in peaceable and quiet spirits, O if you would free your selves from temptations labour for Contentment: It is the peace of God that guards the heart from temptation. I remember I have read of one *Marius Curio* that when he had bribes sent him to tempt him to be unfaithful to his Country, he was sitting at home at dinner with a dish of turnips, and they came and promised him rewards, saith he, that man that can be contented with this fare that I have, will not be tempted with your rewards, I thank God I am content with this fare, and as for rewards let them be offered to those that cannot be content to dine with a dish of turnips: So the truth is we see it apparently, that the reason why many do betray their trust, as in the Parliament service and Kingdom, because they cannot be contented to be in a low condition. Let a man be contented to be in a low condition, and to go meanly cloathed if God sees it fit, such a man is shot-free (as I may so say) from thousands of temptations of the Devil, that do prevail against others to the damning of their souls: Oh in such times as these are when men are in danger of the loss of their estates, I say these men that have not got this grace are in a most lamentable condition, they are in more

danger:

danger for their ſouls than they are for their outward eſtates, you think it is a ſad thing to be in danger of your outward eſtates that you may loſe all in a night, but if you have not this contented ſpirit within you, you are in more danger of the temptations of the Devil to be plundered that way of any good, and to be led into ſin; Oh when men think thus, they muſt live as brave as they were wont to do, theſe men make themſelves a prey to the Devil; but for ſuch as can ſay, let God do with me what he pleaſes, I am content to ſubmit to his hand in it, the Devil wil ſcarce meddle with ſuch men. It's a notable ſpeech of a Philoſopher that lived upon mean fare, and as he was eating herbs and roots ſaith one to him, If you would but pleaſe *Dioniſius* you need not eat herbs and roots: but he anſwered him thus, If you would but be content with ſuch mean fare you need not flatter *Dioniſius*. So temptations wil no more prevail upon a contented man, than a dart that is thrown againſt a braſen wal. That's the fifth particular.

The ſixt Excellency is, *The abundant comforts in a mans life that Contentment wil bring*: Contentment wil make mans life exceeding ſweet and comfortable, nothing more than the Grace of Contentment; many waies I wil ſhew how it brings in Comfort.

1. As firſt, What a man hath, *he hath it in a kind of Independent way*, not depending upon any creature for his comfort.

2. *A contented man whoſe eſtate is low, if God raiſes his eſtate he hath the love of God in it*, and then it's abundantly more ſweet than if he had it and his heart not contented; or if he had not the love of God in it: for it may be God grants to a diſcontented man his deſire, but he can not ſay it is from love; if a man hath quieted his ſpirit firſt, and then God grant him his deſire, he may have more comfort in it, and more aſſurance that he hath the love of God in it.

3. This Contentment is a comfort to a mans ſpirit in this, *That it doth keep in his comforts, & keep out whatſoever may damp his comforts, or put out the light of them.* I may compare this Grace of Contentment to a Marriners Lanthorn, a Marriner when he is at Sea, let him have never ſo much proviſion in his Ship, yet if he be thouſands of leagues from land, or in a rode that he ſhall not meet

meet with a Ship in three or four months, if he hath never a Lanthorn in his Ship, nor nothing whereby he may keep a Candle light in a ſtorm, he will be in a ſad condition, he would give a great deal to have a Lanthorn, or ſomething that may ſerve inſtead of it. When a ſtorm comes in the night, and he cannot have any light come above board, but it is puſt out preſently, his condition is very ſad: ſo many men can have light of comfort when there is no ſtorm, but let there come but any affliction, any ſtorm upon them their light is puſt out preſently, and what ſhall they do now? when the heart is furniſhed with this Grace of Contentment, this Grace is (as it were) the Lanthorn, and it keeps comfort in the ſpirit of a man, light in the midſt of a ſtorm and tempeſt. When you have a Lanthorn in the midſt of a ſtorm you can carry a light every where up and down the ſhip to the top of the Maſt if you will, and yet keep it light; ſo the comfort of a Chriſtian when it is enlivened with the Grace of Contentment, it may be kept light whatever ſtorms or tempeſts come, yet he can keep light in his ſoul. Oh! this helps thy comforts exceeding much.

Seventhly, *There is this excellency in Contentment, that it fetches in the comfort of thoſe things we have not really in poſſeſſion*; & perhaps many that have not outward things have more comfort than thoſe have that do enjoy them themſelves: As now a man by diſtilling herbs, though he hath not the herbs themſelves, yet having the water that is diſtill'd out of them, he may enjoy the benefit of the herbs: So though a man hath not the real poſſeſſion of ſuch an outward eſtate, an outward comfort, yet he by the grace of Contentment may fetch it in to himſelf. By the Art of Navigation we can fetch in the riches of the Eaſt and Weſt-Indies to our ſelves; ſo by the Art of Contentment we may fetch in the comfort of any condition to our ſelves, that is, we may have that comfort by Contentment, that we ſhould have if we had the thing it ſelf. There is a notable ſtory you have for this in *Plutarch*, in the life of *Tyrrhus*; one *Sineus* comes to him, and would very fain have had him deſiſt from the wars, and not war with the Romans; ſaith he to him, May it pleaſe your Majeſty, it is reported that the Romans are very good men of War, and if it pleaſe the gods we do overcome them, what

what benefit shall we have of that victory? *Pyrrhus* answered him, we shall straight then conquer all the rest of *Italy* with ease, saith *Sineus*, indeed it is likely which your Grace speaketh, but when we have won *Italy* will then our wars end? If the gods were pleased *Pyrrhus*, that the victory were atchieved, the way were then broad open for us to attain great conquests, for who would not afterwards go into *Africk*, and so to *Carthage*? But (saith *Sineus*) when we have all in our hands what shall we do in the end? then *Pyrrhus* laughing, told him again, we will then be quiet, and take our ease, and make feasts every day, and be as merry one with another as we can possible; saith *Sineus*, what letteth us now to be as quiet, and merry together, sith we enjoy that presently without further travel and trouble which we should go seek for abroad, with such shedding of blood, and so manifest danger, cannot you sit down and be merry now? so a man may think, if I had such a thing, then I would have another, and if I had that, then you would have more, and what if you got all you desire; then you would be content, why? you may be content now without them: Certainly our Contentment doth not consist in the getting of the thing we desire, but in gods fashioning our spirits to our conditions, there's some men that have not a foot of Ground of their own, yet will live better than other men that are heirs to a great deal of Land. I have known it in the Country sometimes, that a man lives upon his own land, and yet lives very poorly, but you shall have another man that shall farm his Land, and yet by his good husbandry, and by his care, shall live better sometimes than he that hath the Land of his own: So a man by this Art of Contentment may live better without an estate, than another man can of an estate: Oh! it ads exceeding much to the comfort of a Christian: and that I may shew it further, there is more comfort in the Grace of contentment, than there is in any possessions whatsoever; a man hath more comfort in being content without a thing; than he can have in the thing, that he in a discontented way doth desire.

You think if I had such a thing then I should be content. I say there is more good in Contentment, than there is in the thing that you would fain have to cure your discontent, and

that

that I shall open in divers particulars. As thus.

1. I would fain have such a thing, and then I could be content; but if I had it then it were but the creature that did help to my Contentment; but now it's the Grace of God in my soul that makes me content: and surely it is better to be content with the Grace of God in my soul, than with the enjoying of an outward comfort.

2. If I had such a thing, indeed my estate might be better, but my soul would not be better; but by Contentment my soul is better, that would not be bettered by an estate, or lands, or friends; but Contentment makes my self to be better: and therefore Contentment is a better portion than the thing is that I would fain have to be my portion.

3. If I get Content by having my desire satisfied, that's but self-love; but when I am Contented with the hand of God, and am willing to be at his dispose, that comes from my love to God, in having my desire satisfied there I am contented through self-love, but through the Grace of Contentment I come to be contented out of love to God; and is it not better to be contented from a principle of love to God, than from a principle of self-love?

4. If I am contented because I have that that I have a desire to, perhaps I am contented in that one particular, but that one particular doth not furnish me with Contentment in another thing? perhaps I may grow more dainty and nice, and froward in other things: if you give children what they would have in some things, they grow so much the more coy and dainty, and discontented if they have not other things that they would have; but if I have once overcome my heart, and am contented through the Grace of God in my heart, then this doth not content me only in particular, but in general, whatsoever befals me. I am discontented, and would fain have such a thing, and afterwards I have it: now doth this prepare me to be contented in other things? No, but when I have gotten this Grace of Contentment I am prepar'd to be contented in all conditions: and thus you see that Contentment doth bring comfort to a mans life, fills a mans life full of comfort in this world: yea, the truth is, it is even Heaven upon Earth, why what is

Heaven, but the rest and quiet of a mans spirit; what's the special thing that is in Heaven, but rest, and joy, that makes the life of Heaven, there's rest, and joy, and satisfaction in God: so it's here in a contented spirit, there's rest, and joy, and satisfaction in God: In Heaven, there's singing praises to God; a contented heart is alwaies praising and blessing God; thou hast Heaven while thou art upon Earth when thou hast a contented spirit, yea, in some regards it's better than Heaven. How is that you will say? there's some kind of honor that God hath in it, and some excellency that he hath not in Heaven, and that's this.

In Heaven there is no overcoming of temptations, they are not put to any trials by afflictions: there in Heaven they have exercise of Grace, but they have nothing but encouragement to it, and indeed those that are there their grace is perfect, and in that they do excel us, but there is nothing to cross their grace, they have no tryals at al to tempt them to do contrary; but now for a man or woman to be in the midst of afflictions, temptations and troubles, and yet to have grace exercised, and yet to be satisfied in God and Christ, and in the Word and Promises in the mid'st of all they suffer, this may seem to be an honor that God hath from us, that he hath not from the Angels and Saints in Heaven. Is it so much for one that is in Heaven that hath nothing else but good from God, hath nothing to try them, no temptations, is that so much for them to be praising and blessing God, as for the poor soul that is in the midst of tryals and temptations, and afflictions, and troubles? for this soul to go on praising, and blessing, and serving God, (I say) it is an excellency that thou shalt not have in Heaven, and God shall not have this kind of glory from thee in Heaven, and therefore be contented, and prize this Contentment, and be willing to live in this world as long as God shall please and do not think, Oh that I were delivered from all these afflictions and troubles here in this world! if thou wert, then thou shouldest have more ease to thy self: but here's a way of honoring God, and manifesting the excellency of Grace here when thou art in this conflict of temptation that God shall not have from thee in Heaven, and therefore be satisfied and

quiet

quiet, be contented with thy Contentment: I want such and such things that others have, but blessed be God I have a contented heart that others have not, then I say be content with thy Contentment, for that's a rich portion that the Lord hath granted unto them, if the Lord should give unto thee thousands here in this world, it would not be such a rich portion as this, that he hath given thee a contented spirit: Oh go away and praise the name of God, and say, Lord, it's true, these and these comforts that others have I should be glad if I had them, but thou hast cut me short, but though I want these, yet thou hast given me that that is as good and better, thou hast given me a quiet contented heart, to be willing to be at thy dispose.

SERMON VII. *at* Stepney. Sept. 7. 1645.

PHIL. 4. 11.

For I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.

WE proceed now. There are some two or three things more of the excellency of Contentment and then we are to proceed to Application of the Point.

The eight Excellency is, *Contentment is a great blessing of God upon the soul.* There is Gods blessing upon those that are content, the blessing of God is upon them, and their estates, and upon all that they have. We read in *Deut.* of the blessing of *Judah* the principal Tribe; this is the blessing of *Judah*, *And he said, hear Lord the voice of* Judah *and bring him unto his people, let his hands be sufficient for him, and be thou an help to him from his enemies.* Let his hand

be sufficient for him, that is, bring in a sufficiency of all the good unto him that he may have of his own, that's the blessing of *Judah*. So when God gives thee a sufficiency of thine own, (as every contented man hath) there is the blessing of God upon thee, the blessing of the principal Tribe of *Judah* is upon thee. It is the Lord that gives us all things to enjoy, we may have the thing, and yet not enjoy it except God come in with his blessing, now whatsoever thou hast, thou dost enjoy it: Many men have estates and do not enjoy them, it's the blessing of God that gives us all things to enjoy, it is God that through his blessing, hath fashioned thy heart and made it suitable to thy condition.

The ninth Excellency, *Those that are content, they may expect reward from God, that God shall give unto them the good of all those things that they are contented to be without*, and this brings in abundance of good to a contented spirit; There is such and such a mercy that thou thinkest would be very comfortable unto thee if thou hadst it, but canst thou bring thy heart to submit to God in it; thou shalt have the blessing of the mercy one way or other; if thou hast not the thing it self in *re*, thou shalt have it made up one way or other, thou shalt have a Bill of exchange to receive somewhat in lieu of it, there is no comfort that any soul is content to be without, but the Lord will give either the comfort or somwhat in stead of it: Thou shalt have a reward to thy soul for what ever good thing thou art content to be without. You know what the Scripture saith of active obedience, and the Lord doth accept (of his servants) their will for the deed, though we do not do a good thing, yet if our hearts be upright, to will, to do it, we shall have the blessing though we do not do the thing: You that complain of weakness, you cannot do as others do, you cannot do as much service as others do, if your hearts be upright with God, and would fain do the same service that you see others do; you would account it a great blessing of God upon you, the greatest blessing in the world if you were able to do as others do; now you may comfort your selves with this, having to deal with God in the way of the Covenant of Grace, you shall have from God the reward of all you would do, as a wicked man

shall

ſhall have puniſhment for all the ſin he would commit, ſo thou ſhalt have the reward for all the good thou wouldſt do. Now, may we not draw an argument from active obedience to paſſive? There is as good reaſon why thou ſhouldſt expect that God wil reward thee for all thou art willing to ſuffer, as wel as for all that thou art willing to do; now if thou beeſt willing to be without ſuch a comfort and Mercy when God ſees it fit, thou ſhalt be no looſer, Certainly God will reward thee either with the comfort, or with that that ſhall be as good to thee as the comfort; therefore conſider, how many things have I that others want? and can I bring my heart into a quiet contented frame to want what others have? I have the Bleſſing of all that they have, and I ſhal either poſſeſs ſuch things as others have, or elſe God wil make it up one way or other, either here or hereafter in eternity to me; Oh! what riches are here! with Contentment thou haſt al kind of riches.

Tenthly and laſtly, *By Contentment the ſoul comes to an Excellency neer unto God himſelf, yea the neereſt that may be,* for this word that is Tranſlated *Content*, is a word that ſignifies a *Self-ſufficiency* (as I told you in the opening of the words.) A contented man is a ſelf-ſufficient man. What is the great Glory of God, but to be happy and ſelf-ſufficient of himſelf! Indeed he is ſaid to be Al-ſufficient, but that's but a further addition of the word *All*, rather than of any matter; for to be ſufficient, is Al-ſufficient: Now is this the Glory of God, to be Sufficient, to have Sufficiency in Himſelf, *El-ſhaddai*, to be God, having Sufficiency in himſelf? Now thou comeſt neer to this, thou partakeſt of the Divine Nature, as by Grace in general, ſo in a more peculiar manner by this Grace of *Chriſtian Contentment*, what's the Excellency and Glory of God but this? Suppoſe there were no creatures in the world and that al the creatures in the world were annihilated, God would remaine the ſame bleſſed God that he is now, he would not be in a worſe condition if all Creatures were gone; neither would a contented heart if God ſhould take away al Creatures from him, a contented heart hath enough in the want of al Creatures and would not be more miſerable than now he is, Suppoſe that God ſhould continue thee here, and al creatures that are here in this world were ta-

ken

ken away, yet thou ſtil (having God to be thy portion) wouldeſt be as happy as now thou art, and therefore Contentation hath a great deal of Excellency in it.

Thus we have ſhewed in many particulars the Excellency of this Grace, laboring to preſent the beauty of it before your ſouls that you may be in love with it.

Now my brethren what remains but the practice of this, for this Art of Contentment it's not a ſpeculative thing, only for contemplation, but it is an art of Divinity, and therefore practical, ye are now to labor to work upon your hearts, that there may be this Grace in you, that you may honor God and honor your profeſſion with this Grace of Contentment, for there is none doth more honor God, and honor their profeſſion than thoſe that have this Grace of Contentment. Now that we may fall upon the practice, there is required.

First, *That we ſhould be humbled in our hearts for the want of this, that we have had ſo little of this Grace in us.* For there is no way to ſet upon any duty with profit, til the heart be humbled for the want of the performance of the duty before; many men when they hear of a duty they ſhould perform, they will labor to perform it, but firſt thou muſt be humbled for the want of it, therefore that's the thing that I ſhall endeavor in the Application, to get your hearts to be humbled for the want of this Grace; Oh had I had this Grace of Contentment, what a happy life I might have lived? what abundance of honor I might have brought to the Name of God, and how might I have honored my profeſſion? and what a deal of comfort might I have enjoyed, but the Lord knows it hath been far otherwiſe, Oh how far have I been from this grace of Contentment that hath been opened to me? I have had a murmuring, a vexing, and fretting heart within me, every little croſs hath put me out of temper and out of frame, Oh the boiſterouſneſs of my ſpirit, what a deal of evil doth God ſee in my heart, in the vexing and fretting of my heart, and murmuring and repining of my ſpirit? Oh that God would make you to ſee it: Now to the end that you might be humbled for the want of this, I ſhal endeavor in theſe particulars to ſpeak unto it.

First,

First, I shal set before you, *The evil of a murmuring spirit, there is more evil then you are aware of.*

In the second place, *I will shew you some aggravations of this evil*, It's evil in all, but in some more than in others.

Thirdly, *I shal labor to take away the Pleas that any murmuring discontented heart hath for this distemper of His.*

There's these Three things in this Use of humiliation of the soul for the want of this Grace of Contentment.

For the first, now at this time. The great evil that there is in a murmuring discontented heart.

In the first place, *This thy murmuring and discontentedness it argues much corruption that is in the soul*; as Contentment argues much Grace, and strong Grace, and beautiful Grace? so this argues much Corruption, and strong Corruption, and very vile Corruption in thy heart. As it is in a mans body, If a mans body be of that temper that every scratch of a pin makes his flesh to rankle and to be a sore, you will say, surely this mans body is very corrupt, his blood and flesh is corrupt that every scratch of a pin shal make it ranckle, so it is in thy spirit; if every little trouble and affl ction shal make thee discontented and make thee murmur, and even cause thy spirit within thee to ranckle; or as it is in a wound of a mans body, the evil of a wound it is not so much in the largness of the wound, and in the abundance of blood that comes out of the wound, but in the inflamation that there is in it, or in a fretting and corroding humor that is in the wound; an unskilful man when he comes and sees a large wound in the flesh, looks upon it as a dangerous wound. And when he sees a great deal of blood gush out, he thinks these are the evils of it, but when a Chyrurgion comes and sees a great gash, saith he, this will be heal'd within a few daies, but there's a less wound and there's an inflamation or a fretting humor that is in it, and this wil cost time (saith he) to cure, so that he doth not lay Ballom and healing Salves upon it, but his great care is to get out the fretting humor, or inflamation, so that the thing that must heal this wound it is some drink to purge; But (saith the patient) what good will this do to my wound? You give me somewhat to drink, and my wound is in my arm, or in my leg, what good will this

do

do that I put in my ſtomach? Yes, it purges out the fretting humor, or takes away the inflamation, and till that be taken away the ſalves can do no good. So it is juſt for all the world in the ſouls of men, it may be there is ſome affliction upon them that I compare to the wound; now they think that the greatneſs of the affliction is that which makes their condition moſt miſerable: Oh no, there is a fretting humor, an inflamation in the heart, a murmuring ſpirit that is within thee and that is the miſery of thy condition, and that muſt be purged out of thee before thou canſt be healed, and let God do with thee what he will, till he purges out that fretting humor thy wound will not be healed; a murmuring heart is a very ſinful heart, ſo that when thou art troubled for ſuch an affliction, thou hadſt need turn thy thoughts, rather to be troubled for the murmuring of thy heart, for that' the greateſt trouble, there is an affliction upon thee and that is grievous, but there is a murmuring heart within and that's more grievous. Oh that we could but convince men and women that a murmuring ſpirit is a greater evil than any affliction, let the affliction be what it will be. We ſhall ſhew more afterward that a murmuring ſpirit is the evill of the evil, and the miſery of the miſery.

Secondly, *The evil of murmuring is ſuch, that God when he would ſpeak of wicked men, and deſcribe them, and ſhew the brand of a wicked ungodly man or woman, he inſtances in this ſin in a more ſpecial manner*: I might name many Scriptures, but that Scripture in *Jude* is a moſt remarkable one, in the 14. verſ. and to forward, there it is ſaid, *That the Lord comes with ten thouſands of his Saints, to execute judgment upon all, and convince all that are ungodly among them, of all their ungodly deeds, which they have ungodlily committed, and of all their hard ſpeeches, which ungodly ſinners have ſpoken againſt him.* Mark here in this 15. verſe, there is four times mentioned ungodly ones; All that are *ungodly* among them, all their *ungodly* deeds which they have *ungodly* committed, and of all their hard ſpeeches, which *ungodly* ſinners have ſpoken againſt him: This is in the general. But now he comes in the particular to ſhew who theſe are, theſe are (ſaith he) Murmurers; that's the very firſt. Would you know who are ungod-

ungodly men, that God when he comes with ten thousand of Angels shall come to punish for all their ungodly deeds that they do, and those that speak ungodly things against them? These ungodly ones are Murmurers, Murmurers in the Scripture are put in the fore front of ungodly ones, it's a most dreadfull Scripture, that the Lord when he speaks of ungodly ones puts Murmurers in the very fore front of all, you had need look to your spirits, you may see that this Murmuring, which is the vice contrary to this Contentment is not so small a matter as you think, you think you are not so ungodly as others, because you do not swear and drink as others do, but you may be ungodly in Murmuring, it's true, there is no sin but some seeds and remainers of it are in those that are godly, but when they are under the power of this sin of murmuring, it doth convince them to be ungodly, as well as if they were under the power of drunkenness, or whoredom, or any other sin, God will look upon you as ungodly for this sin as well as for any sin whatsoever. This one Scripture should make the heart shake at the thoughts of the sin of Murmuring.

Thirdly, As it's made a brand of ungodly men, so you shal find in Scripture *that God counts it rebellion*, that is contrary to the worship that there was in contentedness: that is worshipping of God, crouching to God & falling down before him, even as a dog that would crouch when you hold a staff over him: but a Murmuring heart it's a rebellious heart, and that you shall find if you compare two Scriptures together, they are both in the Book of *Numb.* 16. 41. *But on the morrow* (saith the text) *al the congregation of the Children of Israel murmured against* Moses *& against* Aaron, *saying, Ye have killed the people of the Lord*, They all murmured; now compare this with Chap. 17. and vers. 10. *And the Lord said unto* Moses *Bring* Aarons *rod again, before the testimony to be kept for a token against the Rebels.* In the 16. Chap. they Murmured against *Moses* and *Aaron*, and in the 17. Chap. bring the rod of *Aaron* again, before the testimony, for a token against the *Rebels*. So that to be a Murmurer, and to be a Rebel you see in Scripture phrase is all one, it is a rebellion against God: as it is the beginning of rebellion and sedition in a Kingdom when the people are discontent,

and when diſcontentment comes it grows to murmuring, and you can go in to no houſe almoſt but there is murmuring when men are diſcontent, ſo that within a little while it breaks forth into ſedition or rebellion. Murmuring it's but as the ſmoke of the fire, there is firſt a ſmoak and ſmother before the flame breaks forth, and ſo before open rebellion in a Kingdom there is firſt a ſmoke of Murmuring, and then it breaks forth into open rebellion; but becauſe it hath rebellion in the ſeeds of it therefore it is accounted before the Lord to be rebellion. Wilt thou be a Rebel againſt God; When thou feeleſt thy heart diſcontented and Murmuring againſt the diſpenſations of God towards thee, thou ſhouldeſt check thy heart thus, Oh thou wretched heart, what wilt thou be a Rebel againſt God? wilt thou riſe in a way of rebellion againſt the infinite God? yet thus thou haſt done, charge thy heart with this ſin of rebellion, you that are guilty of this ſin of Murmuring you are this day by the Lord charged as being guilty of rebellion againſt him, and God expects that when you go home you ſhould humble your ſouls before him for this ſin, that you ſhould charge your ſouls for being guilty of rebellion againſt God, many of you may ſay, I never thought that I had been a Rebel againſt God before, I thought that I had many infirmities, but now I ſee the Scripture ſpeaks of ſin in another manner than men do, the Scripture makes men (though but murmurers) to be Rebels againſt God, Oh this rebellious heart that I have againſt the Lord that hath manifeſted it's ſelf in this way of murmuring againſt the Lord. That's a Third particular in the evil of diſcontentment.

A fourth particular in the evil of Diſcontentment, *It is a wickedneſs that is exceeding contrary to Grace, and eſpecially contrary to the work of God, in bringing of the ſoul home to himſelf*; I know no diſtemper more oppoſite and contrary to the Work of God in converſion of a ſinner, than this is.

Queſt. *What's the work of God when he brings a ſinner home to himſelf.*

Anſw. The uſual way is, for God to make the ſoul to ſee and be ſenſible of the dreadful evil that there is in ſin, and the great breach that ſin hath made between God and it, for certain.

tainly Jesus Christ can never be known in his beauty and excellency till the soul know that. I do not speak what secret work of the holy Ghost there may be in the soul, but before the soul can actually apply Jesus Christ to its self, it is impossible but it must come to know the evil of sin, and the excellency of Jesus Christ: there may be a seed of faith put into the soul, but the soul must first know Christ, and know sin, and be made sensible of it. Now how contrary is this sin of murmuring to any such work of God; hath God made me see the dreadful evil of sin, and made my soul to be sensible of the evil of sin as the greatest burden? how can I then be so much troubled for every little affliction? Certainly if I saw what the evil of sin was, that sight would swallow up all other evils, and if I were burdened with the evil of sin, it would swallow up all other burdens; what am I now murmuring against Gods hand (saith such a soul) when as a while ago the Lord made me see my self to be a damned wretch, and apprehend it as a wonder that I am not in Hell?

2. Yea, It's mighty contrary to the sight of the infinite excellency and glory of Jesus Christ, and the things of the Gospel. What am I that soul that the Lord hath discovered such infinite Excellency of Jesus Christ to? and yet what shal I think such a little affliction to be so grievous to me, when I have had the sight of such glory in Christ that is more worth than ten thousand worlds? (for so wil a true convert say) Oh! the Lord at such a time hath given me that sight of Christ that I would not be without for ten thousand thousand worlds; but hath God given thee that, and wilt thou be discontent for a trifle in comparison of that?

3. A Third work when God brings the soul home to himself it is, *By taking the heart off from the Creature, the disingaging the heart from all Creature-comforts*: That is the Third work ordinarily that the soul may perceive of its self. It's true, Gods Work may be altogether in the seeds in him, but in the several actings of the soul in turning to God it may perceive these things in it, the disingagement of the heart from the Creature, that's the calling off the soul from the world, *Whom the Lord hath called he hath justified*: what's the calling of the

ſoul but this, the ſoul that was before ſeeking for Contentment in the world, and cleaving to the Creature, now the Lord cals the ſoul out of the world, and ſaith, Oh ſoul, thy happineſs is not here, thy reſt is not here, thy happineſs is elſwhere, and thy heart muſt be looſned from all theſe things that are here below in the world; and this is the work of God in the ſoul to diſingage the heart from the Creature, and how contrary is a murmuring heart to ſuch a thing; a thing that is glued to another you cannot take off, but you muſt rend it; ſo it's a ſign thy heart is glued to the world, that when God would take thee off, thy heart rends, if God by an affliction ſhould come to take any thing in the world from thee, if thou canſt part from it with eaſe without rending, it's a ſign then that thy heart is not glued to the world.

4. A Fourth Work of God in converting of a ſinner, is this, *The caſting the ſoul upon Jeſus Chriſt for all its good*: I ſee Jeſus Chriſt in the Goſpel the Fountain of all Good, and God out of free Grace tendering him to me for life, and for ſalvation, and now my ſoul caſts its ſelf, rouls its ſelf upon the infinite Grace of God in Chriſt for all good; now haſt thou done ſo? hath God converted thee, and drawn thee to his Son to caſt thy ſoul upon him for all thy good, and yet thou diſcontented for the want of ſome little matter in a Creature-comfort? art thou he that haſt caſt thy ſoul upon Jeſus Chriſt for all good? as he ſaith in another caſe, Is this thy faith?

5. *The ſoul is ſubdued to God*; and then it comes to receive Jeſus Chriſt as a King, to rule, to order and diſpoſe of him how he pleaſes, and ſo the heart is ſubdued unto God. Now how oppoſite is a murmuring diſcontented heart to a heart ſubdued to Jeſus Chriſt as a King, and receiving him as a Lord to rule and diſpoſe of him as he pleaſes.

6. There is in the work of thy turning to God the giving up of thy ſelf to God in an everlaſting Covenant: as thou takeſt Chriſt the Head of the Covenant to be thine, ſo thou giveſt up thy ſelf to Chriſt; In the work of Converſion, there is the reſignation of the ſoul wholly to God in an everlaſting Covenant to be his; haſt thou ever ſurrendred up thy ſelf to God in an everlaſting Covenant? then certainly this thy fretting, murmuring,

muring heart is mighty oppoſite to it, certainly thou forgetteſt this Covenant of thine, and the Reſignation of thy ſelf up to God; It would be a marvellous help to you, to humble your ſouls when you are in a murmuring condition; if you could but obtain ſo much liberty of your own ſpirits as to look back to ſee what the work of God was in Converting you, there is nothing would prevail more than to think of that. I am now in a murmuring diſcontented way, But how did I feel my ſoul working when God did turn my ſoul to himſelf? Oh how oppoſite is this to that work, and how unbeſeeming? Oh what ſhame and confuſion would come upon the ſpirits of men and women, if they could but compare the work of corruption in their murmuring and diſcontent with the work of God that was upon their ſouls in Converſion? Now we ſhould labor to keep the work of God upon our ſouls that was at our Converſion; for Converſion muſt not be only at one inſtant at firſt, men are deceived in this, if they think their Converſion is finiſhed meerly at firſt, thou muſt be in a way of Converſion to God al the days of thy life & therefore Chriſt ſaith to his Diſciples, Except ye be converted and become as little children: *Ye be converted*: Why were they not converted before? Yes, they were converted, but they were to continue the work of converſion all the days of their lives, and what work of God there is at the firſt Converſion, it is to abide afterwards. As thus, Alwaies there muſt abide ſome ſight and ſence of ſin, it may be not in the way which you had, which was rather a preparation than any thing elſe; but the ſight and ſence of ſin it is to continue ſtill, that is, you are ſtil to be ſenſible of the burthen of ſin, as it is againſt the Holineſs and Goodneſs and Mercy of God unto thee, and the ſight of the Excellency of Jeſus Chriſt is to continue, and thy Calling out of the Creature, and the Caſting thy ſoul npon Chriſt as a King, ſtill receive him day by day; and the Subduing of thy heart, and the Surrendring of thy ſelf up to God in the way of Covenant; now if this were but dayly continued, there would be no ſpace nor time for Murmuring to work upon thy heart. That's the Fourth Particular.

The Fifth thing in the evil of Diſcontentment, *Murmuring*; and

and discontentment is exceeding below a Christian; Oh! it is too mean and base a distemper for a Christian to give place to it. Now it's below a Christian in many respects.

1. How below the relation of a Christian? The relation to which thou standest. With what relation (you wil say?)

First, The relation thou standest in to God: Dost not thou call God thy Father? and dost not thou stand in relation to him as a child? what, thou murmurer! In 2 *Sam.* 13. 4. it's a Speech of *Jonadab* to *Amnon*, *Why art thou, being the Kings Son, lean from day to day, wilt thou not tell me?* and so he told him; (but that was for a wicked cause) he perceived that his spirit was troubled, for otherwise he was of a fat and plump temper of body, but because of trouble of spirit he was even pin'd away, why what's the matter? thou that standest in this relation to the King and yet any thing should trouble thy heart, (that's his meaning) is there any thing that should disquiet thy heart and yet standest in such a relation to the King, the King's Son? So I may say to a Christian, Art thou the Kings Son, the Son, the Daughter of the King of Heaven, and yet so disquieted & troubled, and vext at every little thing that falls out? as if a Kings Son should cry out, he is undone for losing a bable, what an unworthy thing were this? So dost thou, thou criest out as if thou wert undone, and yet a Kings Son, thou that standest in such relation to God, as unto a Father, thou doest dishonor thy Father in this; as if so be either he had not wisdom, or not power, or not mercy enough to provide for thee.

2. *The relation that thou standest in to Jesus Christ, thou art the Spouse of Christ*: what! one married to Jesus Christ and yet troubled and discontented. Hast thou not enough in him? doth not Christ say to his Spouse, as *Elkanah* said to *Hannah*, (1 *Sam.* 1. 8.) *Am not I better to thee than ten sons?* So doth not Christ thy Husband say to thee, Am not I better to thee than thousands of riches and comforts? such comforts as thou murmurest for want of; hath not God given thee his Son? and wil he not with him give thee al things? hath the love of God bin to thee to give thee his Son in way of marriage? why art thou discontented and murmuring? consider thy relation to Jesus Christ

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as thou art a Spouse and married to him, his Person is thine, and so all the riches of Jesus Christ is thine; as the riches of a husband are the wives, and though there are some husbands so vile as the wives may be forced to sue for maintenance; certainly Jesus Christ will never deny maintainance to his Spouse: it's a dishonor for a Husband to have his Wife go whining up and down; what, thou art match'd with Christ and art his Spouse and wilt thou murmur now and be discontented in thy spirit? You shall observe among those that are newly matched, when there is discontent between the wife and the husband, their friends will shake their heads and say, they do not meet with that that they did expect, ye see ever since they were married together how the man looks, and the woman looks, they are not so cheerily as they were wont to be, surely (say they) it is like to prove an ill match. But it's not so here, it shall not be so between thee and Christ: Oh Jesus Christ doth not love to see his Spouse to have a lowring countenance: no man loves to see discontentment in the face of his Wife, surely Christ doth not love to see discontentment in the face of his Spouse.

3. *Thou standest in relation to Christ* not only as a Spouse but as a *Member*, *Thou art bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh*; and to have a Member of Jesus Christ to be in such a condition, it's exceeding unworthy.

4. *He is thy Elder brother likewise, and so thou art a Co-heir with him.*

5. *The relation that thou Standest in to the Spirit of God*, thou art the Temple of the holy Ghost, the holy Ghost is thy Comforter, it is he that is appointed to convey all comfort from the Father and the Son, to the souls of his people. And art thou the Temple of the holy Ghost, and doth he dwell in thee, and yet for all that thou murmurest for every little matter?

6. *The relation that thou Standest in to the Angels, thou art made one body with them*: for so Christ hath joyned principalities and powers with his Church, they are Ministring Spirits for good to his people, to supply what they need, and thou, and they are joyned together, and Christ is the head of you and Angels.

7. *The relation that you Stand in to the Saints, you are of the same body with them*, they & you make up but one mystical body, with

with Jesus Christ, and if they be happy you must needs be happy; Oh how beneath a Christian is a Murmuring spirit if he considers his relations in which he stands.

Secondly, A Christian should consider, *That murmuring and discontentedness is below the high dignities that God hath put upon him:* Do but consider the high dignity that God hath put upon thee; the meanest Christian in the world is a Lord of Heaven and Earth; he hath made us Kings unto himself, Kings unto God, not Kings unto men to rule over them, and yet I say every Christian is a Lord of Heaven and Earth, yea of life and death. That is, As Christ he is a Lord of all, so he hath made those that are his Members to be Lords of all, Al are yours saith the Apostle, even life and death, every thing is yours. It's a very strange expression that death should be theirs, Death is yours, that is, you are as it were Lords over it, you have that that shal make death to be your servant, your slave, even death it self, your greatest enemies are turned to be your slaves. Faith makes a Christian to be as Lord over all, to be lifted up in excellency above all creatures that ever God made, except the Angels, yea and in some respect above them, I say the poorest Christian that lives is raised to an estate above al the Creatures in the world, except Angels, yea, and above them in divers respects too, and yet discontented, that thou who wert as a firebrand of Hell, and might have been scorching and yelling and roaring there to all eternity, yet that God should raise thee to have a higher excellency in thee than there is in all the works of Creation that ever he made, except Angels, and other Christians that are in thy condition, yea and thou art neerer the Divine Nature than the Angels, because thy nature is joined in an hypostatical union to the Divine Nature, and in that respect thy nature is more honored than the nature of the Angels. And the death of Christ is thine, he died for thee, and not for the Angels, and therefore thou art like to be raised above the Angels in divers respects: yea, thou art in such an estate as this is, thou that art set apart to the end that God might manifest to all eternity what the infinite power of a Deity is able to raise a creature to; for that's the condition of a Saint, a Beleever, his condition is such as he is set apart to the

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end that God might manifeſt to all eternity what his infinite power is able to do to make the creature happy; art thou in ſuch a condition? Oh! how low and beneath this condition is a murmuring and diſcontented heart for want of ſome outward comforts here in this world: How unſeemly is it that thou ſhouldeſt be a ſlave to every croſs, that every affliction ſhal be able to ſay to thy ſoul, Bow down to us: We accounted that a great ſlavery, when men would ſay to our ſouls, Bow down: As the cruel Prelates were wont to do in impoſing things upon mens conſciences, they did in effect ſay, Let your conſciences, your ſouls bow down to us, that we may tread upon them: that is the greateſt ſlavery in the world, that one man ſhould ſay to another, let your conſciences, your ſouls bow down that we may tread upon them; but wilt thou ſuffer every affliction to ſay, bow down that we may tread upon thee? Truly it's ſo, when thy heart is over come with murmuring and diſcontent: Know that thoſe afflictions which have cauſed thee to murmur, have ſaid to thee, Bow down that we may tread upon thee; nay, not afflictions, but the very Devil doth prevail againſt you in this: Oh! how beneath is this to the happie eſtate that God hath raiſed a Chriſtian unto! What! the ſon of a King ſhall he have every baſe fellow to come and bid him bow down that he may tread upon his neck? thus doeſt thou in every affliction: the affliction, the croſs, and trouble that doth befal thee, ſaith, Bow down that we may come and tread upon thee.

Thirdly, *Murmuring it's below the ſpirit of a Chriſtian.* Below his Spirit, the ſpirit of every Chriſtian ſhould be like the ſpirit of his father; every father loves to ſee his ſpirit in his child, loves to ſee his Image, not his Image of his body only, to ſay, here's a child for al the world like the father, but he hath the ſpirit of his father too: a father that is a man of ſpirit, Loves to ſee his ſpirit in his child, rather than the feature of his Bodie: Oh the Lord that is our Father, loves to ſee his ſpirit in us: Great men love to ſee great Spirits in their children; and the great God loves to ſee a great ſpirit in his Children; we are one Spirit with God, and with Chriſt, and one Spirit with the holy Ghoſt, therefore we ſhould have a ſpirit that might manifeſt the Glory of the Father, Son, and holy Ghoſt in our ſpi-

rits; that's the ſpirit of a Chriſtian indeed. The ſpirit of a Chriſtian ſhould be a Lyon-like ſpirit, as Jeſus Chriſt is the Lyon of the Tribe of *Judah* (ſo he is called) ſo we ſhould manifeſt ſomewhat of the Lyon-like Spirit of Jeſus Chriſt; he manifeſted his Lyon-like Spirit in paſſing through all afflictions and troubles whatſoever, without any murmuring againſt God When he came to drink that bitter cup, and even the dregs of it, he prayed to God (indeed) that if it were poſſible it might paſs from him, but preſently, Not my will, but thy will be done: As ſoon as ever he did mention the paſſing of the cup from him (though it were the moſt dreadful cup that ever was drunk ſince the world began,) yet at the mentioning of it not my will, but thy will be done; here Chriſt ſhewed a Lyon-like Spirit, in going through all kind of afflictions whatſoever without any murmuring againſt God in them: Now a murmuring ſpirit is a baſe dejected ſpirit, croſs and contrary to the Spirit of a Chriſtian, and it's very baſe. I remember that the Heathens account it very baſe, *Plutarch* doth report of a certain people that did uſe to manifeſt their diſdain to men that were over much dejected by any affliction, they did condemn them to this puniſhment, To wear womens cloaths all their daies, or ſuch a ſpace of time at leaſt they ſhould go in womens cloaths in token of ſhame and diſgrace to them; becauſe they had ſuch effeminate ſpirits, they thought it againſt a manlike ſpirit, and therefore ſeeing they did un-man themſelves they ſhould go as women. Now ſhall they account it an unmanlike ſpirit, to be over much dejected in affliction: and ſhal not a Chriſtian account it an unchriſtianlike ſpirit to be overmuch dejected by any affliction whatſoever? I remember another compares murmuring ſpirits, to children when they are weaning, What a deal of ſtir have you with your children when you wean them? how froward and vexing are they? So when God would wean thee from ſome outward comforts in this world, Oh how fretting and diſcontented art thou! Children will not ſleep themſelves, not let their mothers ſleep when they are weaning; and ſo when God would wean us from the world, and we fret, vex, and murmur, this is a childiſh ſpi-

rit.

Fourthly,

Fourthly, *It's below the profession of a Christian.* The profession of a Christian, what's that? A Christians profession is, To be dead to the world, and to be alive to God, that's his profession, to have his life to be hid with Christ in God, to satisfie himself in God; What, is this thy profession? and yet if thou hast not every thing that thou wouldest have to murmur and be discontent, thou dost in that even denie thy profession.

Fifthly, *It is below that special Grace of Faith.* Faith is that that doth overcome the world, it is that that makes all the Promises of God to be ours: Now when thou tookest upon thee the profession of Religion, Did God ever promise thee that thou shouldest live at ease, and quiet, and have no trouble? I remember *Austin* hath such an expression, What is this thy faith? what did I ever promise thee (saith he) that thou shouldest ever flourish in the world? art thou a Christian to that end? and is this thy faith? I never made any such promise to thee when thou tookest upon thee to be a Christian: Oh its mighty contrary to thy profession, thou hast never a promise for this, that thou shouldest not have such an affliction upon thee: And a Christian should live by his faith; it is said, that the Just doth live by faith: now thou shouldest not look after any other life but the life that thou hast by faith; now thou hast no ground for thy faith, to beleeve that thou shouldst be delivered out of such an affliction; and then, why shouldest thou account it such a great evil to be under such an affliction? Certainly that good that we have in the ground for out faith, it is enough to content our hearts here, and to all eternity: A Christian should be satisfied with that that God hath made to be the object of his faith, the object of his faith is high enough to satisfie his soul, were it capable of a thousand times more than it is: Now if thou maiest have the object of thy faith full, thou hast enough to content thy soul: and know that when thou art discontented for want of such and such comforts, if thou wouldest but think thus, God did never promise me that I should have these comforts, and at this time, and in such a way as I would have, but I am discontented because I have not these which God did never yet promise me, and therefore I sin much

againſt the Goſpel, and againſt the Grace of Faith.

There is yet another thing, It's below the hopes of Chriſtians: Oh! the moſt glorious things that the Saints hope for.

And againſt the helps that Chriſtians have. Chriſtians have great helps that may help them againſt murmuring.

And it is againſt that which God expects from Chriſtians. God expects other manner of things from them than this.

Yea, and it is below that that God hath from other Chriſtians. Theſe things I ſhal open at another time.

SERMON VIII. *At* Stepney. *Sept.* 21. 1645.

PHIL. 4. 11.

For I have learned in whatſoever ſtate I am, therewith to be content.

I Mentioned divers things the laſt day to ſet out the evil of diſcontent; I ſhal name Two or Three more.

Sixthly, It is below a Chriſtian in this, *Becauſe it's below thoſe helps that a Chriſtian hath more than others have*; they have the Promiſes to help them that others have not; it's not ſo much to have a *Nabal* have his heart ſink, becauſe he hath nothing but the Creature to uphold him, but it's much for a Chriſtian that hath Promſes and Ordinances to uphold his ſpirit which others have not.

Seventhly, *It's below the expectation that God hath of Chriſtians*, for God expects not only that they ſhould be patient in afflictions but that they ſhould rejoyce and triumph in them: now

now Christians, when God expects this from you, for you not so much as to have attained to contentedness under afflictions, Oh this is beneath the expectation of God from you.

Eightly, *It is below that that God hath had from other Christians.* Others have not only been contented with little crosses, but they have triumphed under great afflictions, they have suffered the spoiling of their goods with joy, read but the latter part of the 11. of the *Hebrews*, and you shal find what great things God hath had from his people, and therefore not to be content with smaller crosses, this must needs be a great evil.

The Sixth evil that there is in a murmuring spirit, is this, *By murmuring you undo your prayers, for it is exceeding contrary to the prayers you make unto God*: When you come to prayer to God, you acknowledg his Soveraignty over you, you come there to profess your selves to be at Gods dispose, what do you pray for except you acknowledg that you are at his dispose, except you wil stand (as it were) at his dispose, never come to petition to him, if you wil come to petition to him, and yet will be your own carver, you go cross to your prayers, to come as if you would beg your bread at your Fathers gates every day, and yet you must do what you list, this is the undoing of the prayers of a Christian. I remember I have read of *Latimer* that speaking concerning *Peter* that he denied his Master (saith he) *Peter* forgot his *pater-noster*, for that was *Hallowed be thy Name*, and *thy Kingdom come*: So we may say, when you have murmuring and discontented hearts you forget your prayers, you forget what you have prayed for, for you must make the Lords Prayer to be as a pattern for your Prayers though you say not alwaies the same words, what do you pray, *but give us this day our dayly bread?* for that's Christs intention that we should have that as a pattern, and is a directory (as it were) how to make your prayers; now God doth not teach any of you to pray, Lord give us so much a yeer, or let me have such kind of cloth, and so many dishes at my table, Christ doth not teach you to pray so, but he teaches us to pray, *Lord give us our bread*, shewing that you should be content with a little: What have you not bread to eat? I hope there's none of you here but have that

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Obj.

Obj. But I do not know if I ſhould die what ſhould become of my Children: Or if I have bread now I know not where I ſhal have it the next week, or where I ſhal have proviſion for the winter.

Anſw. Where did Chriſt teach us to pray, Lord give us proviſion for ſo long a time? no, but if we have bread for this day Chriſt would have us content: Therefore when we murmur becauſe we have not ſo much variety as others have, we do (as it were) forget our *Pater-noſter*; It's againſt our prayers, we do not in our lives hold forth the acknowledgment of the Soveraignty of God over us as we ſeem to acknowledg in our prayers; therefore when at any time you find your hearts murmuring then do but reflect upon your ſelves and think thus, Is this according to my prayers, wherein I held forth the Soveraign Power and Authority that God hath over me?

The ſeventh thing that I ad for the evil of diſcontentment, is, *The woful effects that comes to a diſcontented heart from murmuring.* I'le name you five; There are five evil effects that comes from a murmuring ſpirit.

1. *By murmuring and diſcontent in your hearts, you come to loſe a great deal of time*; How many times do men and women when they are diſcontented let their thoughts run, and are muſing and contriving through their preſent diſcontentedneſs; then let their diſcontented thoughts be working in them, for ſome hours together, and they ſpend their time in vain. When you are alone you ſhould ſpend your time in holy meditation, but you are ſpending your time in diſcontented thoughts; you who complain that you cannot meditate, you cannot think on good things, but if you begin to think of them a little, preſently your thoughts are off from them, but if you be diſcontented with any thing, then you can go alone, and muſe, and roll things up and down in your thoughts to feed a diſcontented humor: Oh labor to ſee this evil effect of murmuring, the loſing of your time.

2. *It doth unfit a man for duty*: A man or woman that is in a contented frame, you may turn ſuch a one to any thing at any time, he is fit for to go to God at any time; but when one is in a diſcontented condition, then a man or woman is exceeding unfit

unfit for the service of God. And it causes many distractions in duty, it unfits for duty, and when you come to perform duties, Oh the distractions that are in your duties, when your spirits are discontented; when you hear of any ill news from Sea and cannot bear it, or of any ill from a friend, or any loss or cross, Oh what distractions do they cause in the performance of holy duties! When you should be in enjoying communion with God, you are distracted in your thoughts about the cross that hath befallen you, whereas had you but a quiet spirit, though there should great crosses befal you, yet they would never hinder you in the preformance of any duty.

3. *Consider what wicked risings of heart, and resolutions of spirit there are many times in a discontented fit.* In some discontented fits the heart riles against God, & against others, and sometimes hath even desperate resolutions what to do to help themselves. If the Lord should have suffered you to have done, (sometimes in a discontented fit) what you had thought to do, what wonderful misery had you brought upon your selves: Oh it was a mercy of God that did stop you, had not God stopt you, but let you go on when you thought to help your selves this way and the other way, Oh it had been ill with you, do you but remember those risings of heart and wicked resolutions that sometimes you have had in a discontented mood, and learn to be humbled upon that.

4. *Unthankfulness, that's an evil and a wicked effect that comes from discontent.* Unthankfulness the Scripture doth rank among very great sins. For men and women that are discontent though they injoy many mercies from God, yet they are thankful for none of them, for this is the vile nature of discontentment, to lessen every mercy of God, to make those mercies they have from God to be as nothing to them, because they have not what they would have. Sometimes it's so even in spiritual things, if they have not all they would have, the comforts that they would have, then what they have is nothing to them, do you think that God will take this well? If you should give a friend, a kinsman, a purse of money to go and trade withal, and he should come and say, What do you give me?

me? they are but a few counters, they will do me no good: you cannot bear this at his hand if he ſhould do ſo, becauſe he hath not ſo much money as he would: So for you to be ready to ſay, All that God hath given me is nothing worth, will do me no good, they are but counters; though they are precious Graces of Gods ſpirit that are more worth than thouſands of worlds, yet for you to ſay, they are nothing, they are but common gifts, and all is but in hypocriſie, all counterfeit, Oh! what an unthankful thing is this! the Graces of Gods Spirit are nothing to a diſcontented heart that hath not all that it would have; and ſo for outward bleſſings, though God hath given you health of Body, and ſtrength, and hath given you ſome competency for your family, ſome way of lively-hood, yet becauſe you are diſappointed in ſomewhat that you would have therefore all is nothing unto you; Oh! what unthankfulneſs is here? God expects that every day you ſhould ſpend ſome time in bleſſing his Name for what mercy he hath granted unto you, there's not any one of you who are in the loweſt condition but you have abundance of mercies to bleſs God for, but diſcontentedneſs makes them nothing. It's an excellent ſpeech that I remember *Luther* hath, (ſaith he) This is the Rhetorick of the Spirit of God, (it's a very fine ſpeech of his) to extenuate evil things, and to amplifie good things; if there falls out a croſs, to make the croſs to be but little, but if there be a mercy to make the mercy to be great; as thus, If there be a croſs, if the Spirit of God prevails in the heart, ſuch a man or woman will wonder that it is no greater, and will bleſs God that though there be ſuch a croſs, yet that it is no more; that's the work of the Spirit of God: and if there be a mercy, wonders at Gods goodneſs that God granted ſo great a mercy: The Spirit of God extenuates evils and croſſes, and doth magnifie and amplifie all mercies, and makes all mercies ſeem to be great, and all afflictions ſeem to be little. But (ſaith he) the Devil goes quite contrary, the Rhetorick of the Devil is quite otherwiſe, he doth leſſen Gods mercies, and amplifie evil things, as thus, A godly man wonders at his croſs that it is no more, a wicked man wonders his croſs is ſo much, Oh (ſaith he) none was ever ſo afflicted as I am! If there be a croſs, the Devil puts the ſoul upon

upon musing on it, and making it greater than it is, and so it brings discontent: And then on the other side, if there be a mercy then it's the Rhetorick of the Devil to lessen the mercy, Indeed (saith he) the thing is a good thing, but what is it? It is no great matter, and for all this I may be miserable. Thus the Rhetorick of Satan doth lessen Gods mercies, and doth encrease afflictions: And for this I'le give you a notable example that we have in Scripture, it is the example of *Korah*, *Dathan*, and *Abiram*, In *Numb.* 16.12.13. *And* Moses *sent to cal* Dathan *and* Abiram *the sons of* Eliab: *which said, We will not come up. Is it a smal thing that thou hast brought us up out of a Land that floweth with milk and honey, to kil us in the wilderness, except thou make thy self altogether a Prince over us?* Mark, they slighted the Land that they were going into, the Land of *Canaan*, that was the Land that God promised them that should flow with milk and hony: But mark here their discontentedness, because they met with some troubles in the wilderness, Oh it was to slay them, they made their affliction in the wilderness, to be greater than it was, Oh it was to kill them, though it were indeed to carry them to the Land of *Canaan*. But now their deliverance from Egypt though it was a great mercy, they made that mercy to be nothing, for say they, You have brought us out of a Land that floweth with milk and honey, what land was that? It was the Land of Egypt, the Land of their bondage, but they call it a Land that flowed with milk and honey, though it were the Land of their most cruel and unsupportable bondage; whereas they should have blessed God as long as they had liv'd for Gods delivering them out of the Land of Egypt, yet meeting with some crosses they make their deliverance from Egypt no mercy, no, it was rather a misery to them, Oh (say they) Egypt was a Land that flowed with milk and honey. Oh what baseness is there in a discontented spirit! a discontented spirit out of envy to Gods Grace will make mercies that are great to be little, yea to be none at all. Would one ever have thought that such a word should have come from the mouth of an Israelite that had been under bondage and cried under it, and yet when they meet with a little cross in their way to say, you have brought us out of the Land that floweth with milk and honey, to say they

were better before than now, and yet before they could not be contented neither; this is the usuall unthankful expression of a discontented heart: And it is so with us now when we meet with any cross in our estates, and taxations and troubles, especially if any among you have been where the enemy hath prevailed, you are ready to say, We had plenty before and we are now brought to a condition of hardship, we were better before when we had the Prelates and others to domineer: and so we indanger our selves to be brought into that bondage again; Oh let us take heed of this, of a discontented heart, there is this woful cursed fruit of discontent to make men and women unthankful for all the mercies God hath granted to them, and this is a sore and grievous evil.

And lastly, *Ther's this evil effect in murmuring, It causes shiftings of spirit:* they that murmur and are discontent, are liable to temptations, to shift for themselves in sinful and ungodly waies, discontent is the ground of shifting courses and unlawful waies. How many of you may have your consciences condemn you of this, that you in the time of your afflictions have sought to shift for your selves by waies that have been sinful against God, and your discontent was the bottom and ground of it? If you would avoid shiftings for your selves by wicked waies, labor to mortifie this sin of discontent, to mortifie it at the root.

The Eight evil that there is in murmuring and discontent is this *There is a great deal of folly, extream folly in a discontented heart, it's a foolish sin.* I shall open the folly of it in many particulars.

1. *It takes away the present comfort of what you have, because you have not somwhat that you would have.* What a foolish thing is this, that because I have not what I would have, I will not enjoy the comfort of what I have? Do not you account this folly in your children, you give them some victuals and they are not contented, perhaps (they say) it's not enough, they crie for more, and if you do not presently give them more they will throw away that they have, and though you account that folly in your Children, yet you deal thus with God; God gives you many mercies, but you see others have more mercies

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than you and therefore you cry for more; but God gives you not what you would have, and upon that you throw away what you have, Is not this folly in your hearts? It is unthankfulness.

2. There's a great deal of folly in discontentment, for *by all your discontent you cannot help your selves*, you cannot get any thing by it. Who can by taking any carking care *add one cubit to his stature, or make one hair that is white, to be black?* You may vex and trouble your selves, but you can get nothing by it. Do you think that the Lord wil come in a way of mercy ever a whit the sooner because of the murmuring of your spirits? Oh no, but mercy will be rather deferred the longer for it; though the Lord were before in a way of mercy, yet this distemper of your hearts were enough to put him out of his course of mercy, and though he had thoughts that you should have the thing before, yet now you shal not have it. If you had a mind to give such a thing to your child, yet if you see him in a discontented fretting way, you wil not give it him; and this is the very reason why there are so many mercies denied to you, because of your discontentment, you are discontented for want of them, and therefore you have them not, you do deprive your selves of the enjoyment of your own desires because of the discontent of your hearts, because you have not your desires, And is not this a foolish thing?

3. There's a great deal of folly in this, *There are many foolish carriages commonly that a discontented heart is guilty of: They carry themselves foolishly towards God and towards men*; there are such expressions, and such kind of behavior comes from them, as makes their friends to be ashamed of them many times; their carriages are so unseemly, they are a shame to themselves, and their friends.

4. *There is a great deal of folly in discontent and murmuring: for it doth eat out the good and sweetness of a mercy before it comes.* If God should give a mercy that we are discontented for the want of, yet the blessing of the mercy is as it were eaten out before we come to have it. Discontent is like a worm that eats the meat out of the Nut, and then when the meat is eaten out of it, then you shal have the shel. If a child should cry for

a Nut that hath the meat eaten out, or all worm-eaten, what good would the child have by having the Nut? so such an outward comfort you would fain have and you are troubled for the want of it, but the very trouble of your spirits is the worm that eats out the blessing of the mercy, and then perhaps God gives it you, but gives it you with a curse mixed with it, that you were better not have it, than have it. That man or woman that is discontented for want of some good thing, if God doth give that good thing to them before they be humbled for their discontent that did proceed from them, such a man or woman can have no comfort of the mercy, but it will be rather an evil than a good to them: And therefore for my part if I should have a friend or brother, or one that were as dear to me as my own soul, that I should see discontented for the want of such a comfort, I should rather pray, Lord keep this thing from them, til thou wilt be pleased to humble their hearts for their discontent, let not them have the mercy til they come to be humbled for their discontent for the want of it, for if they have it before that time they wil have it without any blessing: And therefore it should be your care when you find your hearts discontented for want of any thing, to be humbled for it thinking thus with your selves, Lord, if that that I do so immoderately desire should come to me before I be humbled for my discontent for want of it, I am certain I can have no comfort of it, but I shal rather have it as an affliction to me. Many things which you desire as your lives, and think that you should be happy if you had them, yet when they do come you find not such happiness in them, but they prove to be the greatest crosses and afflictions to you that ever you had, and upon this ground, because your hearts were immoderately set upon them before you had them. As it was with *Rachel*, she must have children or else she died, wel saith God seeing you *must*, you shal have them, but though she had a child she died according to what she said, *Give me children or else I die.* So in regard of any other outward comforts, people may have the thing, but often-times they have it so as it proves the heaviest cross to them that ever they had in all their lives, such a child as you were discontent for the

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want of it, it may be it was ſick, and your hearts were out of temper for fear that you ſhould loſe it, and God reſtores it, but he reſtores it ſo as he makes it a croſs to your hearts all the daies of your lives. One obſerves concerning *Manna*, when the people were contented with their allowance that God allowed them, then it was very good, but when they would not be content with Gods allowance, but would gather more than God would have them; then (ſaith the text) there was wormes in it: So when we are content with our conditions, and that which God diſpoſes of us to be in, ther's a bleſſing in it, then its ſweet to us but if we muſt needs have more, and keep it longer than God would have us to have, it then there wil be worms in it, and no good at all.

5. *There's a great deal of folly in diſcontentedneſs, for it makes our afflictions a great deal worſe than otherwiſe it would be*; it no way removes our affliction, nay, while they do continue they are a great deal the worſe and heavier, for a diſcontented heart is a prond heart, and a proud heart wil not pul down his ſails when there comes a tempeſt and ſtorm: If a Marriner when a tempeſt and ſtorm comes ſhould be froward and would not pul down his ſails, but is diſcontented with the ſtorm, Is his condition the better becauſe he is diſcontented and wil not pull down his ſails? Will this help him? Juſt ſo it is for all the world with a diſcontented heart, a diſcontented heart heart is a proud heart, and he out of his pride is troubled with his affliction, and is not contented with Gods diſpoſe, and ſo he will not pul down his ſpirit at all, and make it bow to God in this condition in which God hath brought him; now is his condition the better becauſe he wil not pull down his ſpirit? No certainly abundantly worſe, a thouſand to one but the tempeſt and ſtorm overwhelms his ſoul. And thus you ſee what a great deal of folly there is in the ſin of diſcontentment.

The Ninth Evil of murmuring & diſcontentment is this, *There is a mighty deal of danger in the ſin of diſcontentment, for it exceedingly provoketh the wrath of God*; it's a ſin that doth much provoke God againſt his creature; we find moſt ſad expreſſions in Scripture (and examples too) how God hath been provoked

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againſt many for their diſcontent; in *Numb.* 14. you have a notable text, and one would think that that were enough for ever to make you fear murmuring, in the 26. verſe, it is ſaid, *The Lord ſpake unto* Moſes *and* Aaron *ſaying*, what did he ſay? *How long ſhal I Bear with this evil Congregation which mumur againſt me?* How long ſhal I bear with them ſaith God, *This evil Congregation*; Oh that's an evil Congregation that murmurs againſt me! And how long ſhal I bear with them? they do murmur and they have murmured: as thoſe that have murmuring ſpirits and murmuring diſpoſitions, they wil murmur again, and again, *How long ſhal I bear with this evil Congregation that murmur againſt me?* How juſtly may God ſpeak of many of you that are this morning before the Lotd, How long ſhal I bear with this wicked man or woman that doth murmur againſt me, and hath uſually in the courſe of their lives murmured againſt me when any thing fals out otherwiſe than they would have it? And mark what follows after, *I have heard the murmuring of the Children of Iſrael:* You murmur, it may be others hear you not, nay, it may be you ſpeak not at all, or but half words, yet God hears the language of your murmuring hearts, and thoſe muttering ſpeeches, and thoſe half words that come from you. And further obſerve in this verſe, how the Lord repeats this ſin of murmuring, *How long ſhal I bear with this evil Congregation which murmur againſt me?* Secondly, *I have heard their murmuring*; Thirdly, *which they murmur againſt me*: *Murmur Murmur, Murmur*, Three times in one verſe he repeats it; and this is to ſhew his indignation againſt the thing: When you expreſs indignation againſt a thing you wil repeat it over again, & again; now the Lord becauſe he would expreſs his indignation againſt this ſin, he repeats it over again, & again, and it follows in ver. 28. *Say unto them, as truly as I live ſaith the Lord, As ye have ſpoken in mine ears, ſo wil I do to you.* Mark, God ſwears againſt a murmurer; ſomtimes in your diſcontent you wil be ready to ſwear (it may be) do you ſwear in your diſcontent? So doth God ſwear againſt you for your diſcontent. And what was it that God would do unto them? ver. 29, 30. *Doubtleſs your carkaſſes ſhall fall in the wilderneſs, and you ſhal not come into the Land concerning which I ſwear, to make you dwel therein*: as if God

ſhould

should say, if I have any life in me, your lives shall go for it, as I live it shall cost you your lives. A discontented murmuring fit of yours may cost you your lives. You see how it provokes God, there is more evil in it than you are aware of, it may cost you your lives, and therfore look to your selves, and learn to be humbled at the very beginnings of such distempers in the heart. So in *Psal.* 106. 24. 25. *Yea, they despised the pleasant Land, they beleeved not his word; but murmured in their tents, and hearkned not unto the voice of the Lord; therefore he lifted up his hand against them to overthrow them in the wilderness.* Here are divers things observable in this Scripture.

First, That which we spoke to before, How a murmuring heart doth slight Gods mercies, so it is here, *They despised the pleasant Land*: and that a murmuring heart is contrary to faith, *they beleeved not his word*, but (saith the text) *they murmured in their tents, and hearkned not unto the voice of the Lord.* Many men & women wil hearken to the voice of their own base murmuring hearts, that will not harken to the voice of the Lord; if you would harken to the voice of the Lord there would not be such murmuring as there is: but mark what follows upon it you may not think to please your selves in your murmuring discontentedness, & think that no evil shal come of it; *Therefore he lifted up his hand against them to overthrow them*: you that are discontented, you lift up your hearts against God, and you cause God to lift up his hand against you; perhaps God laies his finger upon you softly in some afflictions that are upon you in your families or else where, and you cannot bear the hand of God that lies upon you as tenderly as a tender-hatted Nurse that laies her hand upon the child, you cannot beare the tender hand of God that is upon you in a lesser affliction; it were just with God to lift up his hand against you in another manner of affliction; Oh a murmuring spirit provokes God exceedingly. There is another place in 16. of *Numb.* Compare the 41. vers. and the 46. vers. together, *But on the morrow all the Congregation of the Children of* Israel *murmured against* Moses *& against* Aaron *saying, Ye have killed the people of the Lord*: and mark in the 46. vers, *And* Moses *said unto* Aaron, *Take a Censer and put fire therein from off the Altar, & put on incense, and go quickly unto*

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the Congregation and make an atonement for them, for there is wrath gone out from the Lord, the plague is begun; mark how Gods wrath is kindled; in the 41. verse, the Congregation had murmured; and they murmured but against *Moses* and *Aaron*, (perhaps you murmur more directly against God) and that was against God in murmuring against Gods Ministers, it was against God but not so directly; but it may be the murmuring of your hearts is more directly against Gods dealings with you: if you murmur against those that God makes Instruments, (because you have not every thing that you would have) as against the Parliament, or such and such that are publick Instruments, it's against God; it was but against *Moses* and *Aaron* that the Israelites murmured, and they said that *Moses* and *Aaron* had killed the people of the Lord. though it was the hand of God that was upon them for their former wickedness, in murmuring. It is usual for wicked vile hearts to deal thus with God, that when Gods hand is a little upon them for to murmur again and again, and so to bring upon themselves even infinite kind of evils? but now the anger of God was quickly kindled, Oh saith *Moses*, Go, take the Censer quickly for wrath is gone out from Jehovah, the plague is begun: so while you are murmuring in your families, the wrath of God may quickly go out against you, quickly, in the morning or evening, when you are a murmuring, the wrath of God may come quickly out upon your families or persons that are never so prepared for present wrath as when you are in a murmuring discontented fit, those that stand by and see you in a murmuring discontented fit, have cause to say, Oh let us go and take the Censer, let us go to prayer, for we are afraid that wrath is gone out against this family, against this person: And it were a very good thing for thee that art a godly wife when you see your husband come home and fall to murmuring because things go not according to his desire, to go to prayer and say, Lord pardon the sin of my husband: and so for the husband to go to God in prayer falling down and beseeching of him that wrath may not come out against his family for the murmuring of his wife. And the truth is, at this day there hath been (at least lately) as much murmuring in *England* as ever was,

and

and even in this very particular the plague is begun, and this very judgment it doth come many times upon murmuring, upon those that are so discontented in their families, and are alwaies grumbling and murmuring at any thing that falls out amiss, (I say) this text of Scripture in *Numbers* doth cleerly hold forth this, That the Lord brings the Plague upon men for this sin of murmuring, he doth it in Kingdoms and Families, and upon particular persons. Though we cannot alwaies point out the particular sin that God brings this for, yet this should be examined how far we are guilty of this sin of murmuring; because the Scripture holds forth this so cleerly, that *Moses* when he did but hear that they murmured, Do they murmur? (saith he) Go forth quickly, and seek to pacifie the anger of God, *For wrath is gone out and the plague is begun.* And 1. *Cor.* 10. 10. there you have a notable example of Gods heavy displeasure against murmuring, *Neither murmur ye as some of them also murmured and were destroyed of the destroyer.* Take heed of murmuring as some of them did, (he speaks of the people of *Israel* in the wilderness) but saith he, what came of it? *They were destroyed of the destroyer.* Now the destroyer is thought to be the fiery Serpents that were sent among them: They murmured, and God sent fiery Serpents to sting them. What do you think that such a cross and affliction doth sting you? Perhaps such an affliction is upon you, and it seems to be grievous for the present, What? do you murmur and repine? God hath greater crosses to bring upon you: Those people that murmur for the want of outward comforts, for want of water, (sometimes) and for the want of bread, they murmur, but the Lord sends fiery Serpents among them. I may say to a murmuring heart, *Wo to thee that Striveſt with thy Maker:* wo to that man, that woman that strives against their Maker; What doest thou else, but strive against thy Maker? Thy Maker hath the absolute dispose of thee, and wilt thou strive against thy Maker? What doth this murmuring discontented heart of thine do otherwise but wrangle and contend, and strive even with God himself? Oh wo to him that strives against his Maker! I may further say to thee, as God speaks to *Job*: *Job.* 38. 1. 2. When *Job* was impatient, *Now God spake* (saith the text) *out of the whirlwind,*

and said, Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledg? So doest thou speak against Gods waies, and his providences that hath fallen out concerning thy estate and outward comforts? who is this; *Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledg?* Where's that man or woman whose hearts are so bold and impudent, as dare speak against the administration of Gods providence?

The Tenth Evil of murmuring and discontent is this, *There's a great curse of God upon it, so far as it doth prevail in one that is wicked, it hath the curse of God upon it.* In *Psal.* 59. 15. see there what the curse of God is upon wicked and ungodly men, *Let them wander up and down for meat and grudg if they be not satisfied.* That is the imprecation and curse upon wicked and ungodly men, that if they be not satisfied they shal grudg; when thou art not satisfied in thy desires and findest thy heart grudging against God, apply this Scripture, What, is the curse of the wicked upon me? This is the curse that is threatned upon wicked and ungodly ones, That they shall grudg if they be not satisfied And in *Deut.* 28. 67. There it's threatned as a curse of God upon men, that they cannot be content with their present condition, *But they shal say in the morning, would God it were even; & at even, would God it were morning*; and so they lie tossing up and down and cannot be content with any condition that they are in, because of the sore afflictions that be upon them; and therefore it is further threatned as a curse upon them, in the 34. vers. *That they should be mad for the sight of their eyes which they should see:* This is but the extremity of their discontentedness; that is, They shall be so discontented, as they shall be even mad. Many men & women in discontented moods are mad kind of people, and though you may please your selves in such a mad kind of behavior, yet know, that it is a curse of God upon men to be given up to a kind of madness for evils that they suppose are upon them, and that they fear. In the 47. verse, there is a notable expression for to shew the curse of God upon murmuring hearts; the Lord threatning the curses that shall be upon them, (saith he) verse, 45. 46. and 47: *The Curse shall pursue thee, and they shal be upon thee for a sign, and for a wonder, and upon thy seed for ever: Because thou servedst not the*

Lord

Lord thy God with joyfulneſs and with gladneſs of heart for the abundance of all things. God here threatens to bring his curſe ſo upon them, as to make them a wonder and a ſign to others, Why? *becauſe they have not ſerved the Lord with joyfulneſs of heart*, (that may be added to that of the wrath of God upon men) therefore God would bring ſuch a curſe upon them as would make them a wonder to all that were about them. Oh how far art thou then that haſt a murmuring heart, from ſerving the Lord with joyfulneſs?

The Eleventh Evil of diſcontent and murmuring is this, *There is much of the ſpirit of Satan in a murmuring ſpirit.* The Devil is the moſt diſcontented creature that is in the world; He is the proudeſt creature that is, and the diſcontenteſt creature, and the moſt dejected creature. Now therefore ſo much diſcontentment as thou haſt, ſo much of the ſpirit of Satan thou haſt. It was the unclean ſpirit that went up and down and found no reſt; ſo when a man or womans ſpirit hath no reſt, it is a ſign that it hath much of the unclean ſpirit, of the ſpirit of Satan. And thou ſhouldeſt think this with thy ſelf, Oh Lord what have I the ſpirit of Satan upon me; It is Satan that is the moſt diſcontented ſpirit that is, and Oh! how much of his ſpirit have I upon me that can find no reſt at al?

Twelfthly, Murmuring and diſcontent hath this evil in it, *There is an abſolute neceſſity, that thou ſhould'ſt have diſquiet al the daies of thy life.* As if a man that is in a great croud ſhould complain that other folks touch him. While we are in this world God hath ſo ordered things, that afflictions muſt befal us, and if we wil complain and be diſcontented upon every croſs and affliction, we muſt complain and be diſcontent all the daies of our lives, Yea, God in juſt judgment wil let things fal out on purpoſe to vex thoſe that have vexing ſpirits, and diſcontented hearts, and therefore there is a neceſſity that they ſhould live diſquiet all their daies: and men will not much care to diſquiet thoſe that are continually murmuring, Oh they will have diſquiet all their daies.

Laſtly, There's this dreadful evil in diſcontent and murmuring, *God may juſtly withdraw his care of you, & his protection over you, ſeeing God cannot pleaſe you in his adminiſtrations.* We

use to say to discontented servants; Nay, if you be not pleased, mend your selves when you will. If you have a servant not content with his diet, and wages, and work, you say, Mend your selves. So may God justly say to us, we that profess our selves servants to him, to be in his work and yet are discontented with this thing or that in Gods family, God might justly say, Mend your selves. What if God should say to any of you, If my care over you do not please you, then take care of your selves if my protection over you will not please you, then protect your selves: Now all things that do befal you, befal you through a providence of God, and if you be those that belong to God there is a protection of God over you, and a care of God. Now if God should say, Well, you shall not have the benefit of my protection any longer, and I will take no further care of you: would not this be a most dreadful judgment of God from Heaven upon you? Take heed what you do then in being discontent with Gods will towards you, and indeed upon discontent this may befal you. And this is the reason why many people though Gods protection hath been very gratious over them for a time, and they have thriven abundantly, yet afterwards almost all that behold them may say, that they live as if God had cast off his care over them, and as if God did not care what befal them. Now then my brethren, put all these together, all that we were speaking of the last day, and these particulars that have been added now this morning for the setting out of a Murmuring and Discontented spirit; Oh what an ugly face hath this sin of Murmuring, and Discontentedness? Oh what cause is there that we should lay our hands upon our hearts, and go away and be humbled before the Lord because of this! Whereas your thoughts were wont to be exercised about providing for your selves, and getting more comforts to your selves, let the stream of your thoughts now be turned to humble your selves for your discontentedness, Oh that you may have your hearts break before God, for otherwise you shall fall to it again, Oh the wretchedness of mans heart! You will find in Scripture concerning the people of *Israel*, how strangely they fel to their murmuring again and again, do but observe three texts of Scripture, for that, the

first

firſt in the 15. of *Exod.* at the begining there you ſhall have *Moſes* and the Congregation ſinging to God and bleſſing God for his mercy, *Then ſang* Moſes *and the Children of* Iſrael *this ſong unto the Lord, and ſpake ſaying, I wil ſing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed glorioufly, the horſe & his rider hath he thrown into the Sea.* And then, *The Lord is my ſtrength & ſong, & he is become my Salvation, he is my God & I will prepare him an habitation, my Fathers God, & I wil exalt him;* and ſo he goes on, *And who is like unto thee O Lord amongſt the Gods? Who is like thee glorious in holineſs, fearful in praiſes, doing wonders?* Thus their hearts triumphed in God: but mark before the Chapter is ended in the 23. verſe, *When they come to* Marah (in the ſame Chapter) *they could not drink of the waters of* Marah, *for they were bitter, therfore the name of it was called* Marah, *and the people murmured againſt* Moſes. After ſo great a mercy as this was, what unthankfulneſs was there here in their murmuring! Then God gave them water, but in the very next Chapter they fell to their murmuring, (you read not that they were humbled for their former murmuring, and therefore they murmur again) *Exod.* 16. 1. &c. *al the congregation of the Children of* Iſrael *came to the wilderneſs of* Sin, *&c. And the whol Congregation* (in the ſecond verſe) *of the Children of* Iſrael *murmured againſt* Moſes, *& againſt* Aaron *in the wilderneſs, & the Children of* Iſrael *ſaid unto them, would to God we had died by the hand of the Lord in the Land of* Egypt, *when we ſate by the fleſh-pots, & when we did eat bread to the ful.* Now they want fleſh, (they wanted water before, but now they want meat) they fel to murmuring again they were not humbled for this murmuring againſt God, neither when God gave them fleſh according to their deſires, but they fel to murmuring again, they wanted ſome what elſe. In the very next Chapter (they went not far) in the 17. of *Exod.* beginning. *And al the Congregation of the Children of* Iſrael *journied from the wilderneſs of* Sin *& pitched in* Rephadim, *& there was no water for the people to drink*: Then in the ſecond verſe, *Wherefore the people did chide with* Moſes, *and ſaid, Give us water that we may drink, and* Moſes *ſaid unto them, Why chide you with me? wherefore do you tempt the Lord*: And in the third verſe, *And the people thirſted there for water, and the people murmured againſt* Moſes *and ſaid, wherefore*

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is this, that thou hast brought us up out of Egypt, *to kill us, and our Children, and our Cattel with thirst?* So one time after another, still as soon as ever they had received the mercy then they were a little quieted, but they were not humbled. I bring these Scriptures for this, to shew, That if we have not been humbled for murmuring, the next cross that we meet withal we will fal to murmuring again.

There are divers Aggravations of this sin of Murmuring, I'le mention but one now, and I shall but begin that. The first Aggravation is this,

To murmur when we enjoy abundance of mercy, the greater and the more abundant the mercy is that we enjoy, the greater, and the viler is the sin of murmuring. As here now when God had newly delivered them out of the house of bondage, for them now to murmur because they want some few particulars that they desire, Oh to sin against God after a great mercy, this is a great aggravation, and a most abominable thing. Now my brethren, the Lord hath granted us very great mercies, I'le but speak a word of what God hath done of late, what mercies hath the Lord granted to us this Summer, heaped mercies upon us, one mercy upon another. What a condition were we in at the beginning of this Summer? And what a different condition are we in now! Oh what a mercy is it, that the Lord hath not taken advantages against us, that he hath not made those Scriptures (before mentioned) good upon us for all our murmuring, the Lord hath gone on with one mercy after another. We hear of mercy in *Bristol*, and mercy to our brethren in *Scotland*: But still if after this we should have any thing befal us that is but cross to us, that we should be ready to murmur again presently; Oh let us not so requite God for those mercies of his; Oh let us take heed of giving God any ill requital for his mercies; Oh give God praise according to his excellent greatness, to his excellent goodness and grace.

And now, Hath God given to you the Contentment of your hearts? Take you heed of being the cause of any grief to your Brethren, think not that because God hath been gracious unto you, that therefore he hath given you liberty for to bring them into

into bondage, Oh let not there be ſuch an ill effect of Gods mercy to you, as for you to exclude by petitioning or any other way your Brethren that the Lord hath been pleaſed to make Inſtruments of your peace, let not that be the fruit of it, nor to deſire any thing that your ſelves do not yet underſtand. God is very jealous of the glory of his mercy, and if there ſhould be an ill uſe made of the mercy of God after we enjoy it, Oh it would go to the heart of God! nothing is more grievous to the heart of God than the abuſe of mercy: As now, if any way that is hard and rigid ſhould be taken towards our Brethren, and thoſe eſpecially that God hath made ſuch ſpecial inſtruments of good to us, that have been willing to venture their lives, and all for us; now when we have our turns ſerved, let God and his People, and Servants that have been a means to ſave us ſhift for themſelves as well as they can: Oh! this is a great aggravation of your ſin, to ſin againſt the mercies of God: But for this Aggravation, and eſpecially in this particular, we ſhall ſpeak to (God willing) the next day.

SERMON IX. *At* Stepney. *Sept.* 21. 1645.

PHIL. 4. 11.

For I have learned in whatſoever ſtate I am, therewith to be content.

NOW becauſe it is very hard to work upon a murmuring ſpirit, there are divers Aggravations (I told you we are to conſider of for the further ſetting out of the greatneſs of this ſin; I mentioned but only one the laſt day) now we ſhall proceed in that.

The firſt Aggravation of the ſin of diſcontent and murmuring is this, *For men & women to be diſcontent in the mid'ſt*

mid'st of mercies, in enjoyment of abundance of mercies. To be discontent in any afflicted condition, is sinful and evil, but to be discontent when we are in the midst of Gods mercies, when we are not able to count the mercies of God, yet after to be discontent because we have not all we would have, this is a greater evil. I only mentioned this the last day, that I might shew to you what a great sin it is at such a time as this. The Lord this Summer hath multiplied mercies one upon another, the Lord hath made this Summer to be a continual miracle of mercy; never did a Kingdom enjoy (in so little space of time) such mercies one upon another: Now the publick mercies of God should quiet our hearts and keep us from discontent; and the sin of discontent; for private afflictions is exceedingly aggravated by the consideration of publick mercies to the Land: When the Lord hath been so merciful to the Land, wilt thou be fretting and murmuring, because thou hast not in thy family all the comforts that thou would'st have? As it is a great aggravation of a mans evil of him to rejoyce immoderately in his own private comforts when the Church is in affliction, when the publick suffers grievous and hard troubles, if any man shall then rejoyce and give liberty to himself, at that time to satisfie his flesh to the utermost in all outward comforts, this is a great aggravation of his Sin: So on the contrary for any man to be immoderately troubled for any private afflictions when it goes well with the publick, with the Churches, this is a great aggravation of his sin: It may be when the Church of God was loweſt, and it went worse in other parts, yet thou didst abate nothing of the comfort of thy flesh, but gavest full liberty to satisfie thy flesh as formerly, know this was thy great sin, so on the other side when we have received such mercies in publick, we should have all our private afflictions swallowed up in the publick mercies, and we should think with our selves, though we be afflicted for our particular, yet (blessed be God) it goes well with the Church, and with the publick? the consideration of that should mightily quiet our hearts in all our private discontents, and if it doth not so, know that our sin is much encreased by the mercies of God that are abroad. Now shall Gods mercies aggravate our sins? This is a sad thing, this is

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to turne the mercies of God to be our misery. Did'ſt not thou pray to God for theſe mercies that God hath ſent of late to the publick, theſe great victories that God hath given, did'ſt not thou pray for them? now thou haſt them, Is not there enough in them to quiet thy heart for ſome private trouble thou meetest withall in thy family? Is not there goodneſs enough there to cure thy diſcontentment? Certainly they were not ſuch mercies ſo worthy to be prayed for, except they have ſo much excellency in them as to countervail ſome private afflictions. Publick mercies are the aggravations of private diſcontent, as ſo of publick diſcontent too; if we receive ſo many publick mercies, yet if every thing goes not in the publick according as we deſire, if we be diſcontent at that it will exceedingly aggravate our ſin, God may ſay, What ſhall I beſtow ſuch mercies upon a people, and yet if they have not every thing they would have, they will be diſcontent? Oh! it's exceeding evil. So in particular the mercies that concerns thy ſelf, thy family, if thou wouldeſt conſider thou haſt a great many more mercies than thou hadſt afflictions, I dare boldly averr it concerning any one in this Congregation (ſuppoſe thy afflictions to be what they wil) there is never a one of you but that have more mercies than afflictions.

Object. You will ſay, *I, but you do not know what our afflictions are, our afflictions are ſo as you do not conceive of them becauſe you feel them not?*

Anſw. Though I cannot know what your afflictions are, yet I know what your mercies are, and I know they are ſo great, as I am ſure there can be no afflictions in this world ſo great as the mercies you have: If it were but this mercy, That you have this day of grace and ſalvation continued to you, it's a greater mercy than any affliction, ſet any affliction by this mercy and ſee which would weigh heavieſt, this is certainly greater than any affliction; that you have the day of grace and ſalvation, that you are not now in Hell, this is a greater mercy, that you have the ſound of the Goſpel yet in your ears; that you have the uſe of your reaſon; this is a greater mercy than your afflictions; that you have the uſe of your limbs, your ſenſes, that you have the health of your bodies, health

of body is a greater mercy than poverty is an affliction; there is no man that is rich but if he be wise, if he hath a sickly body, he would part with all his riches that he might have his health; therefore thy mercies are more than thy afflictions. We find in Scripture how the holy Ghost doth aggravate the sin of discontent from the consideration of mercies, you have a notable Scripture for it in the 16. of *Numb.* 8. verse, &c. It's a speech of *Moses* to *Korah* and his company when they murmured, *And* Moses *said unto* Korah, *Hear I pray you, ye sons of* Levi, (there's somewhat that you are sons of *Levy*) *Seemeth it but a smal thing unto you, that the God of* Israel *hath separated you from the Congregation of* Israel, *to bring you neer to himself, to do the service of the Tabernacle of the Lord, and to stand before the Congregation to minister unto them?* *Korah* and his company were murmuring, but mark how *Moses* aggravates this; Seemeth it a smal thing unto you, that the God of Israel hath separated you from the Congregation of *Israel* to bring you neer to himself to do the service of the Tabernacle of the Lord? &c. You see 'tis a great honor that God puts upon a man, a great mercy that he doth bestow upon any man, to separate him from others for himself, to come neer to him, to imploy him in the service of the Tabernacle, to minister to the Congregation in holy things, this is a great mercy, & indeed it's such a mercy as one would think there should be none that God bestows such a mercy upon that should have a murmuring heart for any affliction; It's true, many Ministers of God they meet with hard things that might discourage them, & trouble & grieve their spirits, but now this consideration that God is pleased to imploy them in such a service neer to himself, that though they cannot do good to themselves, yet they may do good to others, this should quiet them: And yet in the 10. vers. *And he hath brought thee neer to him, & al thy Brethren, the sons of* Levi *with thee; & seek ye the Priesthood also?* have not you enough already? but still you are discontented with what you have, and must have more, seek ye yet more? *Seek ye the Priesthood also? for which cause both thou & al thy company are gathered together against the Lord:* And *what is* Aaron *that ye murmur against him?* What, hath God given you such things, and yet will you be murmuring, because you

cannot

cannot have more? Methinks that this place should keep Ministers from murmuring, though they should meet with never such afflictions and crosses, and unkind dealings from men, yet still they should go on with hearts quieted and comforted in the work that God hath set them about, and labor to countervail all their Afflictio ns by being more abundant in the work of the Lord. That is the first text of Scripture that shews how the mercies we enjoy are Aggravations to the sin of murmuring.

And then a second Scripture is in the 2. of *Job*, 10. verse, A speech of *Job* to his wife, what saith *Job* when his wife would have had him curse God and die? (that was a degree beyond murmuring) why saith he, *Thou speakest as one of the foolish women, shal we receive good at the hand of God, and not evil?* you see *Job* did help himself against all murmuring thoughts against the waies of God with this consideration, That he had received so much good from the Lord, what though we receive evil, yet do not we receive good as wel as evil? let us set one against the other, that's the way we should go. In the 17. of *Ecclesiastes* the 14. verse, you have a notable Scripture there whereby you may see what course is to be taken when the heart rises in murmuring, *In the day of prosperity be joyfull, but in the day of Adversity consider*, what should they consider? (mark what follows) *God also hath set the one over against the other, to the end that man should find nothing after him.* God also hath set the one over against the other, that's thus, When thou art in prosperity, then indeed every man can be joyful; but what if afflictions befals him what then? then consider: Consider what? That God hath set one over against the other, thou hast a great deal of affliction, and thou hast had a great deal of prosperity, thou hast many troubles, and thou hast had many mercies, make one column of mercies, and one column of afflictions, and write one against the other, and see if God hath not fil'd one column as ful as the other; you look altogether upon your afflictions, but look upon your mercies also; for instance, It may be God hath afflicted you in one child, but he hath been merciful to you in another child, set one against the other God afflicted *David* in *Absalom*, but he was merciful to *David*

in *Solomon*, and therefore when *David* cryed out, Oh *Absalom my Son, my Son!* If *David* had thought upon *Solomon*, and cryed, Oh *Solomon* my ſon, my ſon, it would have quieted him. And it may be God hath been merciful to thee in a Wife, or in thy Husband, ſet that againſt thy affliction, it may be God croſſes thee in thy Eſtate, but it may be he doth imploy thee in his Service, it may be thou art afflicted in ſome of thy Friends, but thou haſt other Friends that are great mercies to thee, and therefore you ſhould ſet one againſt the other, and it doth concern you ſo to do, for thoſe mercies will be aggravations of your ſins, and you had better make Gods mercies a means to leſſen your ſins, than to be the aggravation of your ſins: If you make not the mercies of God to help you againſt your murmuring, you will make them to be aggravations of the ſin of murmuring. I beſeech you for this take but this one conſideration further, and if you will but work it upon your hearts I hope you may find a great deal of power in it. You find Afflictions, and your hearts are troubled and murmur, conſider how Gods mercies do aggravate this ſin, thus: In the midſt of our ſins we do make account God ſhould accept of our ſervices, do but conſider thus, If in the midſt of our many ſins we hope that God will accept of our poor ſervices, why then ſhould not we in the mid'ſt of our afflictions bleſs God for his many mercies? Shall God be thus gracious to us that notwithſtanding our many ſins, yet he wil not caſt away our poor duties and ſervices that we perform, then why ſhould not we in the midſt of our ſufferings accept of what mercies we have, and not ſlight them and diſregard them? If thou in the midſt of Gods mercies ſhall not be willing to bear afflictions that God laies upon thee, then it were juſt with God that in the midſt of thy ſins he ſhould not regard any of thy duties; now is there not as much power in thy manifold ſins to cauſe God to reject thy duties and ſervices, as there is power in afflictions (in the midſt of many mercies) to take off thy heart from being affected with Gods mercies? And that's the firſt aggravation of the ſin of murmuring, To murmur in the midſt of mercies.

A ſecond Aggravation of the ſin of murmuring is, *When we murmur*

murmur for ſmal things. Saith *Naamans* ſervant to him, Father (for ſo he called him) if the Prophet had required you to do ſome great thing, would not you have done it? how much more this little thing. So I ſay, if the Lord had required you to ſuffer ſome great matter, would not you have been willing to ſuffer? How much more this little thing. I remember I have read in *Seneca* a Heathen, he hath this ſimilitude which is a very fine one to ſet out the great evil of murmuring upon ſmaller afflictions, (ſaith he) Suppoſe a man hath a very fair houſe to dwell in, and he hath fair Orchards and Gardens, and ſet about with brave tall Trees for ornament, if this man now ſhould murmur becauſe the wind blows off a few leaves off his Trees, what a moſt unreaſonable thing were it for him to be weeping and wringing his hands becauſe he loſes a few leaves off his Trees, when he hath abundance of all kind of fruit? Thus it is with many (ſaith he) though they have a great many comforts about them, yet ſome little matter, the blowing off of a few leaves from them is enough to diſquiet them. It was a great evil when *Ahab* having a Kingdom, yet the want of his neighbors Vineyard had ſuch power to diſquiet him: So for us to murmur, not becauſe we have not ſuch a thing as we have need of, but becauſe we have not what poſſibly we might have: this is a very great ſin. Suppoſe God gives a Child that hath all the Limbs and parts compleat, a Child that is very comly, and hath excellent parts, wit, and memory, but it may be there is a wart that grows upon the finger of the Child, and ſhe murmurs at it, and Oh, what an affliction is this to her! ſhe is ſo taken up with that, as ſhe forgets to give any thanks to God for her Child, and all the goodneſs of God to her in the Child is ſwallowed up in that; would not you ſay, this were a folly and a very great evil in a woman ſo to do? Truly our afflictions if we weighed them aright they are but ſuch kind of things in compariſon of our mercies. *Rebeckah* ſhe had a mighty deſire to have children, but becauſe ſhe found ſome trouble in her body when ſhe was with child, ſaith ſhe, *Why am I thus?* As if ſhe ſhould ſay, I had as good have none, only becauſe ſhe found a little pain and trouble in her body. To be diſcontent when the affliction is ſmal and little, that encreaſes very much the

ſin.

ſin of murmuring, it is too much for any one to murmur upon the heavieſt croſs that can befal one in this world, but upon ſome ſmal things to be diſcontent and murmur, that's worſe. I have read of one that when he lay upon a heap of Damask Roſes, he complained, there was one of the Roſe leaves lay double under him: So we are ready thus for very ſmall things to make complaints and be diſcontented with our condition. And that's the Second Aggravation.

A Third Aggravation is this, *For men that are of parts and abilities, to whom God hath given wiſdom, for them to be diſcontent and murmur, that's more than if others do it.* Murmuring and diſcontentedneſs is too much in the weakeſt, yet we can bear with it ſomtimes in Children and Women that are weak; but for thoſe that are Men, Men of underſtanding, that have wiſdom, that God imploys in publick ſervice, that they ſhould be diſcontent with every thing, this is an exceeding great evil; for men in their families (to whom God hath given parts and wiſdom) when things fal out amiſs there, to be alwaies murmuring and repining, their ſin is greater than for women and children to do it.

A Fourth Aggravation is, *The conſideration of the freeneſs of al Gods Mercies to us.* What ever we have it is of free-coſt, what though we have not al we would have, ſeeing what we have is free? If what we have were earned, then it were ſomwhat, but when we conſider that all is from God, for us to murmur at his diſpenſations, is very evil. Suppoſe a man were in a family entertained by a friend, and he did not pay for his board, but he hath it given him for nothing, it's expected ſuch a one ſhould not be ready to find fault with every thing in the houſe, with ſervants, or with meat at table, or the like; if ſuch a one that hath plentiful proviſion, and all given him gratis, and paies nothing for his diet, ſhould be diſcontented if a Cup ſhould not be filled for him as he would have it, or if he ſhould ſtay a minute of an hour longer for a thing than he would, this we would account a great evil: So it is with us, we are at Gods Table every day, and it is upon free coſt whatever we have. It is accounted very unmannerly for a man at his friends table to find fault with things, though at home he may be bold: Now when we

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are at the table of God (for so all Gods administrations to us are his table) and are free-cost, now for us to be finding fault, and be discontented, this is a great Aggravation of our sin.

A Fift Aggravation of the sin of murmuring is this, *When men & women murmur, & are discontented & impatient, when they have the things that they were discontented for the want of before they had them.* So it is somtimes with children, they wil cry for such a thing, and when you give it them, then throw it away, they are as much discontented as they were before. So it was with the people of *Israel*, nothing would quiet them, but they must have a King, *Samuel* perswaded them to the contrary, and told them what kind of King they should have; and when they had a King, in *Hos.* 10. 3. *What shal a King do to us?* they were not contented when they had one. So *Rachel*, she must have children or else she died, and when she had a little trouble she was discontented too; so that we are neither well full nor fasting (as we use to say.)

The sixt Aggravation of the sin of murmuring is this, *For those men & women to be discontent & murmur that God hath raised from mean and low estates and conditions*; This is a very great aggravation if thou be discontent now: There was a time when thou wert low enough; and perhaps when thou wert so low then thou did'st say, O if God would deliver me from such an affliction, or give me but a little more in my estate, I should think my self in a good condition: but if God by his providence doth raise thee, thou art as greedy of more still as thou wert before, and as much discontented as thou wert before: this is an evil thing for people that had mean breeding, and poor beginning for them to be so nice, and dainty that nothing can please them, whereas there was a time not long since that they were low and mean enough; But it is very ordinary for those that are raised from a low and mean condition to be the more nice and dainty, and more proud when they are raised than others that are of better breeding: It's too much for a child to be discontented in his fathers house, but if a man hath taken a poor begger boy, if you had taken such a one into your house that lay begging at your door, and set him at your own table, could

could you bear that such a one should complain that such a thing is not well dreſt, or the like; you could not bear it if your children ſhould do it, but you could bear it a great deal better with them than to hear ſuch a one do it: but thou art a poor beggar, and God hath (as it were) taken thee into his great Family, and if the Lord hath been pleaſed to raiſe thee higher, that now thou haſt a competency, that thou may'ſt live as a man, to be of uſe and ſervice in the place where God hath ſet thee, now wilt thou be diſcontent becauſe thou haſt not every thing that thou deſireſt? We know the Prodigal, when he came to himſelf, Oh! ſaith he, *In my fathers houſe is bread enough.* He did not ſay there's good chear enough, and a great deal of dainties; no, he thought of nothing but bread, *there's bread enough*; So it's ordinary for men and women when they are in a low condition, they think that if they may have bread, any competency, they will be contented and bleſs God, but when they have their bread and things convenient, they muſt have more or elſe they are not contented; know that this is an exceeding great aggravation to thy diſcontentment, when you are raiſed from a very low condition and yet you cannot be contented with what you have.

A ſeventh aggravation of this ſin is this, *For them to be diſcontent that have been very great ſinners and ungodly in their former time.* For men and women that have much guiltineſs upon them, the guilt of very many ſins upon them, that have provok'd God exceedingly againſt them, and have brought themſelves in a moſt dreadful manner under the ſentence of Gods Juſtice, and yet God being pleaſed to reprieve them, for them to murmur and to be diſcontent with Gods adminiſtrations towards them, this is exceeding evil, Oh it were conſideration enough to quiet any murmuring in our hearts, to think thus, We are but ſinners, why ſhould not we be ſufferers that are ſinners? But then conſider, we that are ſuch great ſinners, guilty of ſuch notorious ſins, that it is a wonder that we are out of Hell at this preſent, yet for us to be diſcontent and murmur, how exceedingly doth this encreaſe our ſins! Conſider how we have croſſed God in our ſins, then if God ſhould croſs us in the way of our ſufferings, ſhould not we ſit down quiet without murmuring?

Cer-

Certainly thou never kneweſt what it was to be humbled for thy manifold ſins, that art diſcontented at any adminiſtration of God towards thee.

The Eight Aggravation of the ſin of murmuring is, *For thoſe men that are of little uſe in the world, for them to be Diſcontented.* If you have but a beaſt that you make much uſe of, you wil feed it well, but if you have but little uſe of him, then you turn him into the Commons, little proviſion ſerves his turn, becauſe you make not uſe of him: If we liv'd ſo as to be exceeding uſeful to God and his Church, we might expect that God would be pleaſed to come in, in ſome encouraging way to us, but when our conſciences tell us, we live and do but little ſervice for God, what if God ſhould turn us upon the Commons, yet we are fed according to our work, according to our imployment; Why ſhould any creature be ſerviceable to thee, who art ſo little ſerviceable to God? This one meditation would much help us, to think, I am diſcontent becauſe ſuch and ſuch Creatures are not ſerviceable to me, but why ſhould I expect that they ſhould be ſerviceable to me, when I am not ſerviceable to God? And that's the Eight Aggravation.

A Ninth Aggravation of the ſin of murmuring is this, *For us to be diſcontent at that time when God is to humble us.* It ſhould be the care of a Chriſtian, to obſerve what are Gods waies towards him, what is God about to do with me at this time? Is God about to raiſe me, to comfort me? let me cloſe with Gods goodneſs, and bleſs his Name, let me joyn with the work of God, when he offers mercy to me, to take the mercie he offers. But again, Is God about to humble me? is God about to break my heart, and to bring my heart down to him? let me joyn with God in this work of his, this is for a Chriſtian to walk with God. It is ſaid that *Enoch*, and *Noah* walked with God; walked with God, what's that? That is, To obſerve what is the work of God that God is now about, and to joyn with God in that work of his; ſo that according as God turns this way or that way, the heart ſhould turn with God, and have ſutable workings unto the workings of God towards him. Now then, I am diſcontented and murmur becauſe I am afflicted; Therefore thou art afflicted

becauſe God would humble thee, and the great deſign that God hath in afflicting of thee, is, To break and humble thy heart; And wilt thou now maintain a ſpirit quite oppoſite to the Work of God? for thee to murmur and be diſcontented, is to reſiſt the Work of God; God is doing thee good, if thou couldeſt ſee it, now if he be pleaſed to ſanctifie thy affliction, to break that hard heart of thine, and humble that proude ſpirit of thine, it would be the greateſt mercy that ever thou hadſt in all thy life; Now wilt thou yet ſtand out againſt God? it's even as if thou ſhouldeſt ſay, Well, the Lord is about to break me, and humble me, but he ſhall not; this is the Language of thy murmuring and thy diſcontentedneſs, though thou dareſt not ſay ſo, but though thou ſaieſt not ſo in words, yet it is certainly the language of the temper of thy ſpirit: Oh! conſider what an aggravation this is? I am diſcontented when God is about to work ſuch a work upon me as is exceedingly for my good, but yet I ſtand out againſt him and reſiſt him. That's the Ninth Aggravation.

The tenth Aggravation of the ſin of murmuring and diſcontent is this, *The more palpable and remarkable the hand of God appears to bring about an affliction, the greater is the ſin of murmuring & diſcontent under an affliction.* It's a great evil at any time to murmur & be diſcontent, but though it be a ſin, when I ſee but an ordinary providence working for me, not to ſubmit to that, but when I ſee an extraordinary providence working, that't a greater ſin! that is, When I ſee the Lord in ſome remarkable way working about ſuch an affliction, beyond what any could have thought of, ſhall I reſiſt ſuch a remarkable hand of God? ſhall I ſtand out againſt God when I ſee God expreſs his wil in ſuch a remarkable manner that he would have me to be in ſuch a condition? Indeed before we ſee the will of God apparent we may deſire to avoid an affliction, & may uſe means for it, but now, when we ſee God expreſſing his will from Heaven in a manner beyond ordinarie, and more remarkable, then certainly it is fit for us to fal down and ſubmit to him, and not to oppoſe; when God comes with a mighty ſtream againſt us, it's our beſt way to fall down before him and not to reſiſt; for as tis an argument of a mans diſobedience, when there is not only

ly a Command againſt a ſin, but when God reveals his Command in a terrible way, the more ſolemn the Command of God is, the greater is the ſin in breaking that Command: ſo the more remarkable the hand of God is in bringing an affliction upon us, the greater is the ſin for us to murmur and be diſcontented. Then God expects that we ſhould fall down when he (as it were) ſpeaks from Heaven to thee by name, and ſaith, Well I wil have this ſpirit of thine down, do not you ſee that my hand is ſtretched out, my eyes are upon you; my thoughts are upon you, and I muſt have that proud ſpirit of thine down? Oh then it's fit for the creature to yield and ſubmit unto him. When you ſpeak in an ordinary manner to your ſervants, or Children, you expect they ſhould regard what you ſay, but when you make them ſtand ſtill by you and you ſpeak to them in a more ſolemn way, then if they ſhould diſ-regard what you ſay, you are very impatient: So certainly God cannot take it well when ever he doth appear from Heaven in ſuch a remarkable way to bring an affliction, if then we do not ſubmit to him.

The Eleventh Aggravation of the ſin of murmuring is this, *To be diſcontented though God hath been exerciſing of us long under afflictions, yet ſtil to remain diſcontented.* For a man or woman at firſt when an affliction befals them to have a murmuring heart, then it's an evil; but to have a murmuring heart when God hath been a long time exerciſing them with afflictions, it's more evil. Though an Heifer at firſt when the yoke is put upon him he wrigles up and down and will not be quiet, but if after many months or yeers it ſhall not draw quietly, the Husbandman would rather feed and fat and prepare it for the Butcher than be troubled any longer with it: So though the Lord was content to paſs by that diſcontented ſpirit of thine at firſt, yet God having a long time kept the yoke upon thee, thou haſt been under his afflicting hand (it may be) divers yeers; and yet thou remain diſcontent ſtil; it were juſt with God that he ſhould bear thy murmuring no longer, and that thy diſcontent under the affliction ſhould be but a preparation to thy deſtruction. So you ſee when a man or woman hath been long exerciſed with afflictions and yet are diſcontented, that's an aggravation of the

ſin: Mark that text in *Heb.* 12. 11. *Now* (ſaith the Scripture) *No chaſtening for the preſent is joyous, but grievous; neverthe-leſs afterwards it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteouſneſs, unto them which are exerciſed thereby.* It's true, our afflictions are not joyous but grievous; though at firſt when our affliction comes it is very grievous, but yet (ſaith the text) *afterwards it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteouſneſs to thoſe that are exerciſed thereby*; When thou haſt been a long time in the School of afflictions, thou art a very dullard in Chriſts School if thou haſt not learned this Contentment, *I have learned* (ſaith Saint *Paul*) *in every ſtate therewith to be content*: *Paul* had learned this leſſon quickly, thou haſt been a learning many yeers, perhaps thou maiſt ſay as *Heman* did. *That thou art afflicted from thy youth up*, in 88. *Pſal.* Oh it's a very evil thing if being exerciſed long with afflictions you are not yet contented. The eye is as tender a part as any is in a mans body, but yet the eye is able to continue in, and bear a great deal of cold, becauſe it is more uſed to it; ſo thoſe that are uſed to afflictions, thoſe that God exerciſes much with afflictions (though they have tender ſpirits otherwiſe) yet they ſhould have learned Contentedneſs by this time. A new Cart may creek and make a noiſe, but after the uſe of it a while it wil not do ſo: So when thou wert firſt a Chriſtian, and newly come into the work of Chriſt, perhaps thou makeſt a noiſe and canſt not bear affliction; but art thou an old Chriſtian, and yet wilt thou be a murmuring Chriſtian? Oh that's a ſhame for any that are ancient profeſſors, that have been a long time in the School of Jeſus Chriſt to have murmuring and diſcontented ſpirits. And thus you have had Eleven Aggravations of this ſin of murmuring and diſcontentment.

But now my Brethren becauſe this diſcontented humor, is a very tough humor, and it is very hard to work upon; ther's none that are diſcontented but wil have ſomthing to ſay for their diſcontent, I ſhall therefore deſire to take away what every diſcontented heart hath to ſay for himſelf.

The

The PLEAS of a discontented Heart.

In the first place, *Saith one that is discontented, It is not discontentment, it is the sence of my condition, I hope you would have me sensible of my condition: perhaps when God takes away a friend or some other comfort they are inordinately sorrowful, and wringing their hands as if they were undone, and let any one but speak to them,* (say they) *Would you not have me sensible of my affliction? And thus many would hide their sinful murmuring under Gods hand with this pretence, that it is but sensibleness of their affliction.*

To that I answer, First, There is no sence of any affliction that will hinder the sence of Gods mercies, nay the more we are sensible of our afflictions if it be in a gracious manner, the more sensible we will be of Gods mercy; but thou art so sensible of thy affliction, as it takes away the sence of all thy mercies; Oh this is sinful discontent, this is not to be sensible of thy condition as God would have thee, but it is to be sensible in a wicked way, you go beyond your bounds: By this rule you may come to know when your sorrows and troubles for your afflictions goe beyond the bounds; we may be sorrowful when God afflicts, but Oh! that I might know when my sorrow goes beyond the bounds of it; truly thou maiest know it by this, Doth the sence of thy afflictions take away the sence of thy mercies? If it doth then it goes beyond the bounds.

Secondly, If it were but a bare sence of an affliction it would not hinder thee in the duties of thy condition, the right sence of our afflictions will never hinder us in the performance of the duties of our condition, but thou art so sensible of thy affliction as thou art made unfit for the performance of any duties of the condition that God hath put thee in, surely it's more than meer sence of thy affliction.

Thirdly, If it were but meer sence of thy affliction, yet then thou couldest in this thy condition bless God for the mercies that others have, but thy discontentedness usually breeds envie at it; when any one is discontented with their condition, they have an envious spirit at the conditions of those that are delivered from what afflictions they bear, certainly then it's

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turn'd to be sowr and naught, when thou art so sensible of thy afflictions, and unsensible of mercies as thou art unfit for the duties of thy condition, and envious at others that are not afflicted as thou art.

The Second PLEA.

But wil a discontented heart say, *I am not so much troubled with my afflictions, but it is for my sin rather than my affliction, and I hope you wil give leave that we should be troubled and discontented with our sin; and were it not for sin that I see in my self, I should not be so discontented as I am, Oh! it's sin that is heavy upon me, and it's that that troubles me more than my afflictions.*

Deceive not thy own heart, there is a very great deceit in this, there's many people that when Gods hand is out against them, they wil say, they are troubled for their sin, but the truth is, it's the affliction that doth trouble them rather than their sin, their heart doth exceedingly deceive them in this very thing: For,

First, They were never troubled for their sin before this Affliction came; but you wil say, *It's true, I was not before, for my prosperity blinded me, but now God hath opened my eyes by afflictions:* Hath he so?

Secondly, Then thy great care will be rather for the removing of thy sin, than of thy affliction; Art thou more solicitous about the taking away thy sin, than the taking away of thine affliction?

Thirdly, If it be thy sin that troubles thee, If God should take away thy afflictions, yet except thy sin be taken away, and thy heart be better, this would not content thee, thou couldest not be satisfied: but we see it ordinarily, that if God removes their afflictions, there's no more trouble for their sin. Oh; many do be-ly themselves in this, in saying, that they are so troubled for their sin, and especially those that are so troubled that they are in danger to miscarry, and to make away themselves, there's not one in ten thousand that are in such a condition as this is, but it is afflictions rather than sin that puts them to it; indeed you lay all upon this, as if it were the work

work of the Word, or the Spirit of bondage; I remember I heard not long since of a Divine that being judicious, and used to such kind of things, there came a man to him mightily troubled for his sin, and he could not tell what to do, he was ready to despair; the Divine looks upon him, saith he, Are you not in debt? he confest that he was; and at length the Minister began to find it out, that that was his trouble rather than in his sin, and so was a means to help him that way, that his Creditors should not come upon him, and then the man was pretty quiet, and would not make away himself any longer: For it is an usual thing, that if any thing befals a man that doth cross him, Oh then it's their sin that doth trouble them. Sometimes it is thus with Servants, if their Governors cross them, then they are vext and fret, and come to deal with them, Oh then they wil say they are sorrowful for their sin: but we must take heed of dallying with God that is the Seer and Searcher of the secrets of all hearts, many of you go sullen and dumpish up and down your families, and then you say its your sin that lies upon you, when God knows it is otherwise, it's because you cannot have your wils as you would have.

Fourthly, If thou beest troubled for thy sin, then it will be thy great care not to sin in thy trouble, not by thy trouble to encrease thy sin, but thou art troubled in such a way as the truth is thou doest encrease thy sin in thy trouble, and since thou saiest thou wert troubled for thy sin, thou hast committed more sin than thou didst before.

And then lastly, If it be thy sin that troubles thee, then thou hast the more need to submit to Gods hand; *and accept of the punishment of thine iniquity*, as it is in *Levit.* 26. 41. There's no such consideration to take away murmuring as to look upon my sin as the cause of my affliction.

The Third PLEA.

O saith another, I find my affliction is such that God withdraws himself from me in mine affliction, that is that that troubles me, and can any Body be quiet then? can any Body be satisfied with such a condition when the Lord shall with-

withdraw himself? Were my affliction never so great, yet if I find not God withdrawing himself from me I hope I could be content with any Affliction, but I cannot find the presence of God with me in this Affliction, as sometimes I have found and it is that that troubles me, and makes me to be in such a condition as I am.

Now to that I answer thus, First it is a very evil thing for men and women upon their affliction to conclude that God is departed from them, it may be when it comes to be examined there is no other reason why thou thinkest that God is withdrawn and departed, but because he doth afflict thee, now for thee to make such a conclusion that every time God laies an Affliction upon thee he is departed, this is a sinful distemper of thy heart, and is very dishonorable to God, and grievous to his Spirit. In the 17. of *Exod.* 7. vers. you may see how God was displeased there with such a kind of distemper as this is, *And he called the name of the place* Massah & Meribah, *because of the chiding of the children of Iseral, & because they tempted the Lord, saying, Is the Lord amongst us or not?* Mark, they did murmur because they were brought into afflictions, but see what the text saith, therefore the place was called *Massa* & *Meribah* because they tempted the Lord, saying, *Is the Lord amongst us, or not?* This was to tempt God. Somtimes we are afraid God is departed from us, and it is meerly because we are afflicted. I beseech you observe that Scripture, God calls it a tempting of him, when he afflicts any, for them to conclude and say, that God is departed from them: If a child should cry out of his Father, and say, that his father is turned to be an enemy to him, because he doth correct him, this would be taken ill. I beseech you consider of this one place, it may be of very great use to you, that you may not be ready to think that God is departed, because you are afflicted.

Secondly, If God be departed, the greatest sign of Gods departing is, because you are so disquiet, you make your disquiet to be the fruit of Gods departing, and if it comes to be examined your disquiet is the cause of Gods departing from you, if you could but cure your disquiet, if you could but quiet your own hearts and get them into a better frame of contentedness under Gods hand in afflicting of you, then you would find Gods pre-

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ſence with you, Will you be thus diſquiet till God comes again to you? your diſquiet drives him from you, and you can never expect Gods coming to manifeſt himſelf comfortably to your ſouls, till you have gotten your hearts quiet under your afflictions: and therefore here you ſee how croſſly you reaſon; you reaſon, I am diſquiet becauſe God is gone, when the truth is, God is gone becauſe thou art diſquiet; reaſon but the other way, Oh my diſquiet hath driven God from me, and therefore as ever I would have the preſence of God to come again to me, let my heart be quiet under the hand of God.

Thirdly, Doeſt thou find God departing from thee in thine affliction? Wilt thou therefore depart from God too? Is this thy help? Canſt thou help thy ſelf that way? Becauſe God is gone wilt thou go too? Do I indeed feel God departing from me? It may be it is ſo, it may be God for thy tryal is departed a little from thee and is it ſo indeed? What unwiſe courſe do I take? I commit further ſin and ſo I go further off from God, what a caſe am I in? God goes from me, and I from God: if the child ſees the mother going from it, it's not for the child to ſay, my mother is gone yonder, & I will go the other way, no, but the child goes crying after the mother; and ſo ſhould the ſoul ſay, I ſee the Lord is withdrawing his preſence from me, and now it is beſt for me to make after the Lord with all my might; and *I* am ſure this murmuring humor is not a making after God, but by this *I* go further and further off from God, and what a diſtance is there like to be between God and me within a little while? Theſe are ſome of the *Reaſonings* and *Pleas* of a murmuring and diſcontented heart. There are many others that we ſhall meet withal, and endeavor to ſpeak to your hearts in them, that ſo this tough humor of diſcontent may (as it were) be cut with the Word and ſoftened with the Word, that ſo it may paſs away: for that's the way of Phyſitians when they meet with a body that hath any tough humor, then they give that that hath a piercing quality; when there is a tough humor that ſtops the water that it cannot paſs, they give that that hath a piercing quality that may make paſſage for it; and ſo thou haſt need of ſuch things that are piercing to make way through this tough humor that is in the ſpirits of

men and women whereby they come to live very uncomfortably to themselves and others, and very dishonourably unto God.

SERMON X. *At* Stepney. *Sept.* 21. 1645.

PHIL. 4. 11.

For I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.

NOW there are many *Pleas* & *Reasonings* yet remain, for there's a great deal of do with a discontented murmuring heart. And I remember I find that the same *Hebrew* word that signifies [*to lodg, to abide*] it signifies to *murmur*, they use one word for both, for murmuring is a distemper that doth lodg in men, where it gets in once it lodgeth, abideth, and continueth, and therefore that we may unlodg it and get it out, we wil labor to shew what are the further Reasonings of a discontented heart.

The Fourth PLEA.

Me thinks I could be content with Gods hand (saith one) *so far as I see the hand of God in a thing I can be content: but when men deal so unreasonably and unjustly with me, I know not how to bear that; I can bear it that I should be in Gods hands, but not in the hands of men; my friends or acquaintance when they deal so unrighteously with me, Oh this goes very hard unto me, that I know not how to bear it from men.*

For the taking away of this reasoning, first, Though they be men that bring this cross upon you, yet they are Gods Instruments, God hath a hand in it, and they can go no further than

than God would have them go. This was that that quieted *David* when *Shimei* curst him, saith he, God hath a hand in it, though *Shimei* be a wicked vile man, yet I look beyond him to God. So, Is there any of your friends that deal injuriously with you, and cross with you? look up to God and see that man but as an instrument in Gods hands.

Secondly, If this be your trouble that men do so wrong you, you are rather to turn your hearts to pity them than to murmur or be discontented; for the truth is, if you be wronged by other men, you have the better of it, *For it is better to bear wrong, than to do wrong a great deal*; If they wrong you, if your heart can submit, you are in a better condition than they, because it's better to suffer, than do wrong. I remember it is said of *Socrates* that being very patient when wrong was done to him, they asked him how he came to be so? Saith he, If I meet with a man in the street that is a diseased man, shal I be vexed and fretted with him because he is diseased? Those that wrong me I look upon them as diseased men, and therefore pity them.

Thirdly, Though you meet with hard dealings from men, yet you meet with nothing but kind, good, and righteous dealings from God: When you meet with unrighteous dealings from them, set one against another. And that's for the Answer to the Fourth *Plea*.

The Fifth PLEA.

Oh! but that affliction that comes upon me is an affliction that I never lookt for, I never thought to have met with such an affliction, and that's that I know not how to bear, that's that which makes my heart so disquiet, because it was altogether unlookt for, and unexpected.

For Answer to this, First, It is thy weakness and folly that thou didst not look for it and expect it: In *Acts*, 20. 22 23. see what Saint *Paul* saith concerning himself, *And now behold, I go bound in the spirit to* Jerusalem, *not knowing the things that shal befall me there, save that the holy Ghost witnesseth in every City, saying, That bonds & afflictions abide me.* It's true saith he, I know not the particular affliction that may befal me, but this I know, that the Spirit of God witnesseth, *That bonds & afflictions*

ons shall abide me every where, I look for nothing else but bonds and afflictions whereſoever I go; ſo a Chriſtian ſhould do, he ſhould look for afflictions whereſoever he is, in all conditions he ſhould look to meet with afflictions, and therefore if any affliction ſhould befall him, though indeed he could not fore-ſee the particular evil, yet he ſhould think, this is no more than I lookt for in the general. Therefore no affliction ſhould come unexpectedly to a Chriſtian.

A ſecond Anſwer I ſhall give is this, Is it unexpected? then the leſs proviſion thou madeſt for it before it came, the more careful ſhouldeſt thou be to ſanctifie Gods Name in it now it is come: It is in this caſe of afflictions as in mercies, many times mercy comes unexpected (and that might be a third Anſwer) to you, ſet one againſt the other, I have many mercies that I never lookt for as well as afflictions that I never lookt for, why ſhould not one rejoyce me as well as the other diſturbs me? As it is in mercies, when they come unexpected, the leſs preparation there was in me for receiving mercy, the more need I have to be careful, now to give God the glory of the mercie, and to ſanctifie Gods Name in the enjoyment of the mercie; Oh ſo it ſhould be with us now, we have had mercies this Summer, that we never expected, and therefore we were not prepared for them, now we ſhould be ſo much the more careful to give God the glorie of them: ſo when afflictions come that we did not expect, then it ſeems we laid not in for them beforehand, we had need be the more careful to ſanctifie Gods Name in them, we ſhould have ſpent ſome pains before to prepare for afflictions, and we did not, then take ſo much the more pains to ſanctifie God in this affliction now. And that's a fift reaſoning.

The Sixth PLEA.

Oh! but it is very great, mine affliction it is exceeding great ſaith one, and however you ſay, we muſt be contented, it's true, you may ſay ſo that feel not ſuch great afflictions, but if you felt my affliction that I feel, you would think it hard to bear and be content.

To that I anſwer, Let it be as great an affliction as it will, it is not ſo great as thy ſin, *He hath puniſhed thee leſs than thy ſins.*

Secondly

Secondly, It might have been a great deal more, thou mighteſt have been in Hell: And it is (as I remember) *Bernards* ſpeech ſaith he, *It is an eaſier matter to be oppreſt than periſh.* Thou mighteſt have been in Hell, and therefore the greatneſs of the thing ſhould not make thee murmur, grant it be great.

Thirdly, It may be 't is the greater becauſe thy heart doth ſo murmur: for ſhackles upon a mans legs, if his legs be ſore, it wil pain him the more; if the ſhoulder be ſore, the burden is the greater: It is becauſe thy heart is ſo unſound, that thy affliction is great unto thee, And that is the Sixt Reaſoning.

The Seventh PLEA.

But howſoever you may leſſen my affliction, yet I am ſure it is far greater than the afflictions of others.

Firſt, It may be it is thy diſcontent that makes it greater, when (indeed) it is not ſo in its ſelf.

Secondly, If it were greater than others; why Is thy eye evil becauſe the eye of God is good? why ſhouldeſt thou be diſcontented the more becauſe God is gracious to others?

Thirdly, Is thy affliction greater than others? Then in this thou haſt an opportunity to honor God more than others: So thou ſhouldſt conſider, Doth God afflict me more than other men? God gives me an opportunity in this to honor him in this affliction more than other men, to exerciſe more grace than other men; let me labor to do it then.

Fourthly, If all afflictions were laid upon a heap together: It's a notable expreſſion of *Solon* that wiſe Heathen (ſaith he) Suppoſe all the afflictions that are in the World were laid upon an heap, and every man ſhould come and take a proportion of thoſe afflictions, every one equally, there is ſcarce any man but would rather ſay, Let me have the afflictions that I had before or elſe he were like to come to a greater ſhare, a greater affliction, if ſo be he ſhould equally ſhare with the whol world; Now for you that are poor (that are not in extremity of poverty) if all the riches in the world were laid together, and you ſhould have an equal ſhare, you would be poorer, but take all afflictions and ſorrows whatſoever, if all the ſorrows in the world were laid together

together in a heap, and you had but an equal share of them, your portion would be rather more than it is now for the present: and therefore do not complain, that it is more that others, so as to murmur because of that.

The Eight PLEA.

Another Reasoning that murmuring hearts have is this, *why They think that if the affliction were any other than it is, then they would be more contented.*

First, You must know that we are not to chuse our own rod that God shall beat us with.

Secondly, It may be if it were any other than it is, it were not so fit for thee as this is, it may be therefore God chuses it because it is most cross to thee, as seeing it most sutable for the purging out of that humor that is in thee. If a patient comes to take Physick, and finds himself sick by it, shall he say, Oh! if it were any other potion I could bear it, it may be if it were any other than it is, it would not fit thy disease; yea, if it did not work as it doth it would not fit thy disease: so when thou saiest of an affliction, if it were any other than it is thou couldest bear it, do but answer thy self with this, it may be if it were any other than it is; it would not be fit for me, it would not be right to that sinful humor that there is in my soul, and therefore God sees this to be the fittest and the most sutable for me.

Thirdly, Know that this is the excellencie of Grace in a Christian, T*o be fitted for any condition*; not only to say, If it were this or that, but if it be any. As now, a Marriner if he hath skil he would not say, if it were any other wind but this, if the wind blow in any point but this, I could tell how to mannage my Ship, I could shew skil in other points, but not in this; would not Marriners laugh at such a one? it would be a shame for him to say that he hath skil in any other point but this: So it should be a shame for a Christian to say that he hath skill in any other affliction but this: a Christian should be able to mannage his Ship if the wind blow any way; to guide his soul any way.

The fourth and last answer is this, Know that the Lord hath rewards

rewards and Crowns for all graces, and for the honoring them in all conditions. It may be in ſuch a way as thou thinkeſt thou couldeſt honor God, God hath a Crown for that, and God hath another Crown to ſet upon the heads of thoſe that honor him in ſuch a way as this is, Yea, he hath ſeveral ſorts of Crowns (as I may ſo ſay) in Heaven, and thoſe Crowns he muſt put upon ſome bodies head, and therefore he exerciſes thee in variety of conditions, that ſo thou mighteſt have the ſeveral rewards and Crowns that God hath to reward and Crown thoſe that are faithful in ſeveral conditions.

The Ninth PLEA.

Oh! but the condition that God hath put me in, makes me to be unſerviceable, and this troubles me; it's true, if it were only an affliction & trouble to my ſelf it were not ſo much, but I am put into ſuch a condition by this affliction as I am unſerviceable, & am like to do God no further ſervice, God puts me into a mean eſtate, and what good can I do? and how burdenſom is my life to me, becauſe I can do no ſervice for God! & this is grievous to me.

Indeed if it be true that this is thy great grief, it is a good ſign, If thou canſt ſay as in the preſence of God, above all afflictions here in this world to be laid aſide and not to be imployed in the ſervice of God, I account that the greateſt affliction: I had rather bear any trouble in the world ſo I might do more ſervice, than to be freed from trouble and to be laid aſide and do little ſervice: canſt thou ſay ſo? It is a good ſign of grace for a man to account afflictions to be great becauſe he can do the Lord but little ſervice. Few men account that any affliction at all.

But yet there may be a temptation in this. To murmur at Gods diſpoſe when your calling is low and mean and you can do little ſervice; this is many times a temptation to thoſe that are poor, thoſe that are ſervants and thoſe that are of weak parts, and are fain to work hard to provide bread for their families, it's many times a grievous burden to them to think, ſuch men the Lord uſes in publick ſervice, and I live in an obſcure way, and to what purpoſe is my life?

First,

First, To help against this temptation that thou maiest not murmur against this condition, Do but consider, though thy condition be low and mean, yet thou art in the body, thou art a member of the body though thou beest but a mean member, the Toe, and the Finger hath its use in the body, though it be not the Eye, though it be not the Head, or the Heart, yet it hath its use in the body. And it is an excellent expression that I remember *Austin* hath about this, (saith he) it is better to be the meaneſt member in the body, than to be the higheſt member and more excellent and cut off from the body, it is better to be a little sprig in the Tree joyned to the Root, than to be an Arm cut off from the Root. Now other men that have but common gifts in the world, that are not Members of Jesus Christ, (indeed) they seem to have more excellency than those that are godly, that are in a mean condition, mean parts, mean callings, but they are not of the body, they are not joyned to the Root, and therefore their condition is worse. As a great Arm of a Tree when it is cut off it hath a great many leaves upon it, and it seems a great deal more glorious than those little sprigs that are upon the Tree, but that little Sprig is in a better condition, Why? Because joyned to the Tree and hath sap from the Root and flourisheth, but the other will wither and die within a while: So it is with all the men of the world, they be but like great Boughs cut off from the Tree, though they have excellent parts, and have great estates and pomp and Glory in the world, they have no union with Jesus Christ the Root: But now others that live in a poor condition, a poor Tradesman, a poor servant, a poor laboring man that labors for his family every day, yet he being godly, (saith he) though I have but little for the present, little Glory, little credit, little comfort, yet I am joyned to the body, and there I have supply and that that will feed me with comfort, blessing, and mercy to all eternity: So al that are in a poor condition in this world if they be Godly, do but think of that; though thou beest mean, yet thou art in the body and joyned to the Root, thou art joyned to the principle of comfort, Good, blessing, and mercy that will hold out to eternity, when thousand thousands of glorious pompous men in the world shal wither and perish

periſh everlaſtingly, and therefore be not troubled at thy mean condition.

Secondly; Though thou haſt but a mean calling in this world, and ſo art not regarded as a man of uſe in the world, yet if thou beeſt a Chriſtian, God hath called thee to a higher calling; thy general calling it is a high calling, though thy particular calling be but low and mean: And for that you have a place in the Chapter before my text, *Phil.* 14. 3. *I Preſs towards the mark* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *for the price of the High calling of God in Chriſt Jeſus*: So that every Chriſtian hath an high calling of God in Chriſt Jeſus, God hath called him to the higheſt thing that he hath called any creature to that he hath made, the Angels in Heaven have not a higher calling than thou haſt. Thou that perhaps ſpendeſt thy time in a poor buſineſs, in the meaneſt calling, if thou beeſt a dung-raker, to rake channels or to cleanſe places of filth or any other thing in the world that is the meaneſt that can be conceived of, thy general calling as a Chriſtian doth advance thee higher than any particular calling can advance any man in the world; others indeed that are called to mannage the Affairs of the State, they are in a high Calling, or Miniſters they are in a high Calling, but thine in ſome reſpect is higher. A poor ſervant that muſt be ſcraping all day about poor, mean things, many times may have ſuch a temptation as this is, Oh what a poor condition hath God diſpoſed me to! Will God have regard to ſuch a one that is in ſuch a poor low place as I am? Oh yes Chriſt hath regard to the meaneſt member; as a man hath as true regard to the Toe if it be it pain, and will tender that as truly and verily as any other member; ſo Chriſt hath regard to his loweſt and meaneſt ones.

Thirdly, Thou art in a high calling, though thy outward calling be low in reſpect of men, yet in reſpect of God thou art in the ſame calling with the Angels in Heaven, and in ſome degree called to that that is higher, for the Scripture ſaith that the Angels come to underſtand the Myſtery of the Goſpel by the Church; thou that art a Chriſtian in that general calling of thine, thou art joyned with Principalities and powers and with Angels, in the greateſt work that God hath called any

creature to, and therefore let that comfort thee in this.

Fourthly, Thy calling is Low and mean, yet be not discontented with that, for thou hast a principle within thee (if thou beest a godly man or woman) of Grace that doth raise thy lowest actions to be higher in Gods esteem, than all the brave glorious actions that are done in the world; the principle of Faith doth it, for any man or woman to go on in obedience to God in a way of Faith in the calling that God hath set them, (I say doing this through a principle of Faith) it doth raise this action, and make it a more glorious action than all the glorious Victories of *Alexander* and *Cæsar*, than all their Triumphs and glorious pomp that they had in al their conquests, it was not so glorious as for thee to do the lowest action out of Faith. Or, as *Luther* speaks of a poor Milk-maid, and yet being a beleever, and doth it in Faith, he compares that action to all the glorious actions of *Cæsar*, and makes that a great deal more eminent and glorious in the eyes of God, therefore Faith raises thy works that are but mean, raises them to be very glorious.

Yea, And the truth is, There is more obedience to submit to God in a low calling, than to submit to him in a higher calling; for its cleer obedience, meer obedience that makes thee go on in a low calling; but there may be much self love that makes men go on in a higher calling, for there's Riches, Credit, and account in the world, and rewards comes in by that, which doth not in the other: to go on quietly in a low calling is more obedience to God.

Fifthly, Know further in the last place, There is like to be more reward: For the Lord when he comes to reward he doth not come to examine what the work hath been that men and women have been exercised in, but what their faithfulness hath been, *Well done good and faithful Servant*, saith the Lord, he doth not say, wel done good servant for thou hast been faithful to me in publick works, ruling Cities and States, and Affairs in Kingdoms, and therefore thou shalt be rewarded, No, but, *Well done good and faithful servant*; now thou maiest be *faithful* in little as wel as others are in more, by going on and working thy daies labor, when thou getteſt but a couple of shillings

lings to maintain thy family, thou maieſt be as faithful in this as thoſe are that rule a Kingdom; now God looks to a mans faithfulneſs, and thou maiſt have as great a reward for thy faithfulneſs that art a poor Servant in the Kitchin all the day, as another that ſits upon the Throne al day, and as great a Crown of glory thou maieſt have at the day of Judgment, as a King that ſits upon the Throne, that hath ruled for God upon his Throne; yea, thy faithfulneſs may be rewarded by God with as great glory, as a King that hath ſwaied his Scepter for God; becauſe (I ſay) the Lord doth not ſo much look at the work that is done, as at the faithfulneſs of our hearts in doing it; then why ſhould not every one of us go on comfortably and cheerfully in our low condition, for why may not *I* be faithful as well as another? It's true, I cannot come to be as rich a man, and as honorable as others, but I may be as faithful as any other man, that every one of you may conclude with your ſelves: What doth let but that you that are the pooreſt and meaneſt may be as faithful as the greateſt, yea you may have as glorious a Crown in Heaven, and therefore go on comfortably and cheerfully in your way.

The Tenth PLEA.

There's another reaſoning that ſome may have, and that is this. Oh! *I could bear much affliction in ſome other way, but this is very grievous to me; the unſetledneſs of my condition; though my condition were but low yet if it were in a ſetled way I could be content, but it is ſo unconſtant, and ſo unſetled, that I can never know what to truſt to, but am toſt up and down in the world in an unſetled condition, and this is hard to be content with.*

Now to that I anſwer, Firſt, that the Pſalmiſt ſaith, *That every man in his ſettled eſtate is vanity*, in *Pſalm*, 36. 5, Your books have it, Every man at his *beſt eſtate* is vanity, the world is his *ſetled eſtate*; you think if you were but ſetled, Oh then you could be content, but the truth is, man in his ſettled eſtate is vanity.

Secondly, I anſwer thus, That perhaps God ſees it is better for thee to live in a continual dependance upon him, and not to

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know what thy condition shall be on the morrow, then for thee to have a more setled condition in respect of the comforts of the creature; do but remember that we spake of before, that Christ doth not teach you to pray, Lord, give me enough that will serve me for two or three yeers, but, *this day our dayly bread*; to teach us we must live upon God in a dependant condition every day for dailie bread. Here was the difference that is observable between the Land of *Canaan* and *Egypt*, the Land of *Canaan* that depended upon God for the watering of it with showers from Heaven, but *Egypt* had a constant way of watring the Countrie, that did not so much depend upon Heaven for water, but upon the River *Nylus*, which did at some certain time overflow the Countrie: and they knowing that the watering of their countrie did depend upon that river, and not upon Heaven they grew more proud: and therefore the Scripture to expres *Pharoahs* pride, brings him in saying, *The river is mine*: he could order the River as he pleased, for it was his: *Canaan*, which was a Countrie which was to depend upon God, though they had rain at one time, yet they knew not whether they should have it at another time, and liv'd alwaies in a dependance upon God not knowing what should become of them: Now God thought this to be a better Land for his people than *Egypt*, and this is given as one reason among others for it, because the Lord look't upon this as more sutable to the state of his people that were to live by faith, to be continually depending upon Heaven, upon Himself, and not to have a constant setled way in the creature for their outward dependance. And we find it by experience that when those that are godlie live in the greatest dependance upon God, and have no setled comings in from the creature, they do exercise Faith more, and are in a better condition for their souls than before. Oh! many times it fals out that the worse thy outward estate is, the better thy soul is, and the better thy outward estate is, the worse thy soul is. We read in *Ezra*, 4. 13. the objection that the enemies had against the people of *Israels* building of the wal of the Citie: their writing to *Artaxerxes* against them, saith, *Be it known unto the King, that if the City be builded, and the wals set up again, then they wil not pay toll, tribute, & custom: and so thou shalt endamage the revenue of the*

Kings

Kings. If the wal be built (ſay they) then they wil refuſe to pay toll, tribute, and cuſtom to the King: that is thus, ſo long as they live in ſuch a condition, where they have dependance wholly upon the King, and lie at the Kings mercy, that is, they are in no City that hath walls built, but the King may come upon them when he wil, ſo long they will pay cuſtom to the King, but if once they come to build a wal, and can defend themſelves, and have not their dependance upon the King as before, then they wil denie paying toll, tribute, and cuſtom. So it is thus for al the world between God and mens ſouls, when a ſoul lives in a way of meer dependance upon God, that ſenſibly he ſees God hath him at advantage every moment, Oh then ſuch a ſoul wil pay toll and cuſtom, that ſoul exerciſes faith, and begs every day his daily bread; but if God hedges that man about with an eſtate, with proſperity, perhaps he hath an inheritance befallen him, perhaps he hath a conſtant Office that brings in ſo much yeerly to him duly paid, this man is not ſo ſenſible now of his dependance upon God, he begins now to pay leſs toll and cuſtom to God than before; God hath leſs ſervice from this man now than before. God ſees it better for his people to live in a depending condition: we are very loth in reſpect of God to be dependant, we would be al *Independants* this way, we would be of our ſelves, and have no dependance upon the Lord, but God ſees it better for us to live in a depending condition.

Further, This may be thy comfort, though for outward things thou art mightily unſetled, yet for the great things of thy ſoul and eternal eſtate, there thou art ſetled, there thou haſt a ſettled way, a conſtant way of fetching ſupply, *Of his fulneſs we receive grace, for grace*, thou haſt there abundance of treaſure to go to, and fetch al that thou ſtandeſt in need of and obſerve it that now thy condition is more ſetled in the Covenant of grace than it was in the Covenant of works; in the Covenant of works there God gave man a ſtock to trade with, but he put it in his own hand, ſo that he might trade and get or loſe; but now in the Covenant of Grace God makes ſure, the ſtock is kept in the hand of Chriſt, and we muſt go to him for ſupply continually, for Chriſt keeps the ſtock; perhaps

we

we may trifle away somwhat in our trading, but God takes that care still we should never spend the stock: As a man when his son breaks, having squandred away his stock that he gave him before, afterwards he puts his stocke into a friends hand, and saith he you shal keep his stock and it shall not be at his dispose; so we are in a more setled condition in respect of our eternal estate than *Adam* was in innocency; therefore let that comfort us in al our unsetled conditions in the matters of the world.

The Eleventh PLEA.

But yet there's another reasoning that many murmuring hearts think to feed their humor withal, (say they) *If I never had bin in a better condition, then I could bear this affliction, if God had alwaies kept me in so low a condition I could be content, Oh but there was a time that I prospered more, and I had things at a more ful hand and therefore now it is harder to me to be brought low, as in the these times perhaps a man that had five or six hundred a yeer, but now hath had nothing for a great while, if that man had not bin born to so much, or never had prospered in any higher degree than now he is in, this affliction had bin less, perhaps he hath some mony and friends to live upon but if he had never been in a higher condition he would not have accounted it so great a matter to have been without it now; This many times is our greatest wound that once were in a better condition: and this is the most unreasonable thing for us to murmur upon this ground of any.*

For first, Is thy eye evil, because God hath been good to thee heretofore? It's an ill thing for us to have our eye evil because God is good to others, but to look upon our condition with an evil eye now, because God was once good to us; hath God done thee any wrong because he was formerly more good to thee than he was to others?

Secondly, Thou didst heretofore more prosper? Did God heretofore give thee more prosperity? it was to prepare thee for afflictions; we should look at all our outward prosperity as a preparation to afflictions, if thou hadst done so then it would not have been so difficult for thee to have endured affliction now when thou hadst a great estate yet if thou hadst made use of this mercie of God to prepare thee for thy afflicted estate, then the

the change of thy eſtate would not be ſo grievous. That every Chriſtian ſhould do: have I an Eſtate now? I ſhould prepare for poverty. Have I health now? I ſhould prepare for ſickneſs. Have I liberty? let me prepare my ſelf for impriſonment: What know I what God may cal me to? Have I comfort and peace now in my conſcience? Doth God ſhine upon me? While I have this let me prepare for Gods withdrawing from me. Am I delivered from temptations? Let me prepare now for the time of temptations; If thou wouldeſt do ſo, the change of thy condition would not be ſo grievous to thee. Marriners that are in a calm wil prepare for ſtorms, would they ſay, if we never had calms, we would bear ſtorms? But now we have had calms ſo many years or weeks together, this is grievous: In thy calm thou art to prepare for ſtorms, and the ſtorm would be leſs, thou ſhouldeſt reaſon quite contrary and ſay, Now I am in an afflicted condition, Oh but bleſſed be God, *I was in a comfortable condition,* and bleſſed be God that he was aforehand with me in the waies of his mercy, this one conſideration may help murmuring hearts. Doſt thou murmur becauſe once thou wert better? Know God was beforehand with thee in the waies of mercy, thou ſhouldeſt rather think thus, I have lived for theſe many years (forty years perhaps or more) in a comfortable condition, I have lived in health, and peace, and plenty, what though the remaining part of my time hath ſome ſorrow and affliction? The Lord hath granted to me a confortable ſunſhine all the day long till towards evening, and what if at ſeven or eight a clock at night it begins to rain? Let me thank God I have had ſo fair weather all day. You that are going a voyage, if you have a comfortable wind, and very fair for many months together, what if you have a little ſtorm when you are within ſight of land, will you murmur and repine? Oh No, but rather bleſs God that you have had ſuch a comfortable voyage ſo long: Oh this conſideration would help us all: If it were ſo that now God ſhould ſay, Well, You ſhal never ſee comfortable day more for outward things in this world, Oh then you have cauſe to fall down and bleſs Gods Name that you have had ſo many comfortable daies: now you reaſon quite contrary, whereas you ſhould bleſs God that you have had

had so much comfort, you make what you have had before to be an aggravation of your afflictions now, and so murmur and are discontented. That which God gave you before, upon what terms did you hold it? Did you hold it so as you have in your writings, *To have and to hold for ever*, God gives no such thing, God gives to no man (I say) any thing but grace to run upon that tenour, there's no such thing in all Gods writings for any outward comforts, *To have and to hold for you and your heirs*; indeed for grace he doth give it to your selves, *To have and to hold for ever*; though not for every one that comes out of your Loyns to have and to hold for ever; God doth not give any outward thing so upon any such tenour as that is; if God gives me an understanding of himself, and faith, and humility, and love, and patience, and such graces of his spirit; he gives them me for ever, If he gives me Himself, and his Christ, and his Promise, and his Covenant, he gives me them for ever, what am I therefore that the Sun should alwaies shine upon me, that I must have fair weather all my daies? That which God gives to me, he gave it to me as a pledg of his love, let me return in to him as a pledg of my obedience, there's all the Reason in the world for it, all that a godly man receives from God he receives it as a pledg of Gods love to him, therefore when he comes into an afflicted condition, saith God, Return to me as a pledg of your obedience that you had from me as a pledg of my love; we should cheerfully come in to God and bless God that we have any thing to render unto him as a pledg of our obedience, and say, O it is thy love O Lord that hath given us any thing, that doth enable us to render a pledg of our obedience to thee. When God cals for thy estate or any comforts that thou hast, God calls for it as a pledg of thy obedience to him.

The Twelfth PLEA.

Another reasoning of a murmuring heart is this. *Oh but after I have taken a great deal of pains for such a comfort, yet then I am croſt in it, after a great deal of labor and pains that I have taken now to be croſt, Oh this goes very hard.*

First, I answer, The greater cross, the more obedience and submission.

Secondly,

Secondly, When thou did'ſt take a great deal of pains, was it not with ſubmiſſion to God? Did'ſt thou take pains with reſolutions, that thou muſt have ſuch a thing when thou laboreſt for it? Then know that thou laboreſt not as a Chriſtian, but if thou did'ſt labor and take pains, was it not with reſignation to God? Lord, I am taking pains in the way of my calling, but with ſubmiſſion, I depend wholly upon thee for ſucceſs and a bleſſing; And what was it that thou did'ſt aim at in thy labor? Was it not that thou mighteſt walk with God in the place that God had ſet thee? A Chriſtian ſhould do ſo in his outward calling, I am diligent in my outward calling, but it is, that I might obey God in it; it's true, I do it that I might provide for my family, but the chief thing that I aime at is, That I might yield obedience to God in the way that God hath ſet me: Now if God calls thee to another condition to obey him in, though it be by ſuffering, thou wilt do it if thy heart be right.

Thirdly, There will be the more Teſtimony of thy love to God, if ſo be thou ſhalt now yield up thy ſelf to God in that that coſt thee dear. Shal I offer that to God (ſaith *David*) that coſt me nothing? Thy outward comforts hath coſt thee much, and thou haſt taken much pains to obtain them, and now if thou canſt ſubmit to God in the want of them: (I ſay) in this thy love is the more ſhown that thou canſt offer that to God that coſt thee dear. Now theſe are the principal reaſonings of a diſcontented heart.

The Thirteenth PLEA.

There's one Plea more that may be named, and that is this, ſay ſome, *Though I confeſs my affliction is ſomewhat hard, and I feel ſome trouble within me, yet I thank God I break not out in diſcontented waies to the diſhonor of God, I keep in although I have much a do with my own heart.*

Oh! do not ſatisfie your ſelves with that, for the diſtempers of your hearts, and their ſinful workings are as words before God, *My ſoul be ſilent to God*; That we ſpake of in the beginning

of the opening of this Scripture, it is not enough for thy tongue to be silent; but thy soul must be silent, there may be a sullen discontentedness of heart as wel as a discontentedness manifested in words; and if thou dost but mortifie that inward sullenness, if thou beest afflicted a little more it wil break forth at last.

And thus the Lord I hope hath met with the chief *Reasonings* and *Pleas* for our discontent in our conditions. I beseech you in the Name of God consider of these things, and because they do concern your own hearts, you may so much the better remember them, I had thought to have made a little Entrance into the next Head, and that is some way of helping you to this Grace of Contentment. It is a most excellent Grace, of admirable use as you have heard; and the contrary is very sinful and vile.

SERMON, XI. *At* Stepney. *Octob.* 1. 1645.

PHIL. 4. 11.

For I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.

NOW we are coming to the close of this point of *Contentment* that Jesus Christ doth teach those that are in his School: we have opened the point unto you, and shewed you wherein the Art, and Skill, and Mistery of Christian Contentment lies: and divers things in the way of application rebuking the want of this; and the last day I finished that point of shewing the several Reasonings of a murmuring and discontented heart. I shall now (as being desirous to make an end) leave what was said, and proceed to what remains. There are only these two things for the

the working of your hearts to this Grace of Christian Contentment.

First, The propounding of several CONSIDERATIONS, for the contenting of the Heart in any afflicted condition.

Secondly, The propounding of DIRECTIONS, what should be done for the working of our hearts unto this.

The First CONSIDERATION.

We should consider (in all our wants and inclinations to discontent) *The greatness of the mercies that we have, and the meanest of the things that we want.* The things we want, (if we be godly) they are things of very smal moment in comparison of the things we have, and the things we have are things of very great moment; for the most part that that people are discontent and murmur for the want of, it is, because they have not such things as reprobates have, or may have; why should'st thou be troubled so much for the want of that that a man or woman may have and yet be a Reprobate, as that thy estate is not so great, thy health not so perfect, thy credit not so much, thou maiest have all those things and yet be a Reprobate; now wilt thou be discontent for that that a Reprobate may have? I shal give you the example of a couple of godly men meeting together, *Anthony* and *Diddimus*, *Diddimus* was blind; and yet a man of very excellent parts and graces, *Anthony* ask'd him if he was not troubled at this his want of sight, he confest he was, but (saith he) shall you be troubled at the want of what flies and dogs have and not rather rejoyce and be thankful that you have what Angels have? God hath given you those good things that makes Angels glorious, is not that enough to you, though you want what thing a flie hath? And so a Christian should reason the case with himself, What am I discontented for? I am discontented for want of that that a Dog may have, that a Devil may have, that a Reprobate may have, shal I be discontent for not having that, whenas God hath given me that that makes Angels glorious? *Blessed be God* (saith the Apostle in *Ephes.* 1. 3.) *That hath blessed us with al spiritual blessings in Heavenly places.* It may be thou hast not so great bless-

sings in earthly places as some others have, but if the Lord hath blessed thee in Heavenly places, that should content thee, there's blessings in Heaven, and he hath set thee here for the present as it were in Heaven in a Heavenly place; The consideration of the greatness of the mercies that we have, and the littleness of the things that God hath denied us, is a very powerful consideration to work this Grace of Contentment.

The Second CONSIDERATION.

The Consideration. *That God is beforehand with us with his mercies, should content us* (I spake to this as an aggravation of our discontent, but now I shal use it as a consideration to help us to Contentment) Thou wanteſt many comforts now, but hath not God been beforehand with thee heretofore? Oh thou hast had mercy enough already to make thee spend all the strength thou hast, and time thou shalt live, to bless God for what thou hast had already. I remember I have read of a good man that had liv'd to fifty yeers of age and enjoyed his health for eight and forty yeers exceeding well, and liv'd in prosperity, and the two last yeers his Body was exceedingly diseased, he had the Strangury, and was in great pain; but he reasoned the case with himself thus; Oh Lord thou mighteſt have made all my life to have been a life of torment and pain, but thou hast let me have eight and forty yeers in health: I will praise thy mercies for what I have had, and wil praise thy Justice for what now I feel. Oh it's a good consideration for us to think that God is beforehand with us in the way of mercy: Suppose God should now take away your estates from some of you that have lived comfortably a great while, you wil say, That aggravates our misery that we have had estates; but it is through thy unthankfulness that it doth so; we should bless God for what we have had, and not think that we are worse because we have had thus and thus, we might have been alwaies miserable, and certainly that mans condition is not very miserable that hath no other greater aggravation of his misery but because once he was happy. If there be nothing else to make you miserable, that is no such aggravation but that thou maist bear it, for there is much mercy

cy in that that thou had'st once, and therefore let that content thee.

The Third CONSIDERATION.

The Consideration of the abundance of mercies that God bestows, and we enjoy. It is a speech of *Luther*, (saith he) the Sea of Gods mercy should swallow up al our particular afflictions, name anie affliction that is upon thee, there's a Sea of mercy to swallow it up. If you power a Paile ful of water on the floor of your house it makes a great show, but if you throw it into the Sea, there is no appearance of it; so afflictions considered in themselves we think they are verie great, but let them be considered with the Sea of Gods mercies we do enjoy, then they are not so much, they are nothing in comparison.

The Fourth CONSIDERATION.

Consider the way of God towards al creatures, God carries on al creatures in a vicissitude of several conditions; as thus we have not alwaies Summer, but Winter succeeds Summer; we have not alwaies Day, but Day and Night; we have not alwaies fair weather, but fair and foul; the vegetive creatures do not alwaies flourish, but the sap is in the root and they seem as if they were dead: there's a vissiitude of all things in the world: the Sun doth not shine alwaies to us here, but there is darkness comes after light; now seeing God hath so ordered things with all creatures that there is a mixture of conditions; why should we think it much that there should be a vicissitude of conditions with us somtimes in a way of prosperity, and somtimes in a way of affliction.

The Fifth CONSIDERATION.

A further Consideration is this. *The Creatures do suffer for us why should not we be willing to suffer, to be serviceable to God?* God subjects other creatures, they are fain to lose their lives for us, to lose what ever beautie and excellency they have to be serviceable to us, why should not we be willing to part with any thing

thing in way of service for God; certainly there is not so great a distance between other creatures and Man-kind, as there is between Man-kind and God. Tis an expression of that Martyr Master *Hooper*, that we read of in the Book of Martyrs, in laboring to work his own heart, and the hearts of others to contentedness in the mid'st of his sufferings; he hath this similitude, and you may be put in mind of that every day, (saith he) I look upon the creature, and see what it suffers to be useful to me: as thus, The bruit beasts must die, must be rosted in the fire, and boyl'd, must come upon the trencher, be hackt al in pieces, must be chewed in the mouth, and in the stomach turn'd to that which is loathsom if one should behold it, and al to nourish me, to be useful to my body; and shall not I be willing to be made any thing for God, for his Service; what Abundance of alterations the creature comes under to be made useful for me, to preserve me; then if God wil do so with me for his use, as he doth subject the creatures to me for my use, why should not I rest contented? If God wil take away my estate, and make me poor, if God wil take away my life, hack me in pieces, put me in prison, whatsoever he doth, yet I shal not suffer more for God then the creature doth for me, and surely I am infinitly more bound to God than the creature is to me, and there is not so much distance between me and the creature as between me and God: such Considerations as these wrought the heart of that Martyr to contentedness in his sufferings. And every time the creature is upon your trenchers you may think, What! doth God make the creature suffer for my use? not only for my nourishment, but for my delight; what am *I* then in respect of the infinite God?

The Sixth CONSIDERATION.

Another Consideration for the working of Contentment, it is *To consider that we have but a little time in this world*: If thou beest godly thou shalt never suffer but only in this world; why do but shut your eyes and presently another life is come, as that Martyr said to his fellow Martyr, Do but shut your eyes, (saith he) and the next time they are opened you shal be in another.

ther world. *Athanasius* saith, it is but a little cloud (when he was banished) and it will be over (notwithstanding) presently. These afflictions they are but for a moment. A Marriner when he is abroad doth not think it much if a storm arises, especially is he can see the Heavens cleer beyond it, saith he, it will be over presently. Consider we have not long to live, it may be it may be over before our daies be at an end. but suppose it should not, death wil put an end to all, al afflictions and troubles will soon be at an end by death.

The Seventh CONSIDERATION.

Consider the condition that others have been in that have been our betters. We made some use of that before to shew the evil of discontentment: But further for to work this upon our hearts, it is a mighty Argument to work upon our hearts a contentedness in any condition.

Thou many times doest consider who are above thee, but consider who are under thee.

Jacob that was the heir both of *Abraham* and *Isaac*, for the blessing was upon him, and the promise ran along in him, yet was in a poor mean condition. *Abraham* that was his Grandfather was able to make a kind of Army of his own household, 300 to fight with a King, yet *Jacob* his Grand-child he goes over Jordan with a staff, and lives in a very poor and mean condition for a long time: and *Moses* that might have had all the treasures in *Egypt*, and as some Historians say of him; *Pharoahs* Daughter adopted him for her Son, because *Pharoah* had no heir for the Crown, and so he was like to have come to the Crown, yet what a low condition did he live in when he went to live with *Jethro* his Father in law 40. years together, afterward when he returned to *Egypt*, he and his wife and children, and all that he had, and yet he had but one beast to carry him to *Egypt*, he went in a mean condition when he went from his Father in law to *Egypt* back again.

And *Ellijah* we know how he was fed with Ravens, and how he was fain to shift for his life from time to time, and run into the wilderness up and down, and so did *Elisha*, he was divers

times:

times in a very low condition, the Prophets of God they were to be hid in a cave by *Obadiah*, and there to be fed with bread and water, and the Prophet *Jeremiah* put into a Dungeon, and Oh how was he used! and it were an endles thing to name the particulars of the great sufferings of the people of God. In former time we have sometimes made use of this Argument other waies, the great Instruments of God in the first Reformation they lived in great straights, in a very low condition, even *Luther* himself when he was to die (saith he) Lord (though he were a man of such publick use, and was a great man in the Courts of Princes) Lord I have neither House nor Lands, nor Estate to leave any thing to Wife or Children, but I commit them to thee: and so *Musculus* that was a very choice instrument of God in his time, though he was a man that was worth even a Kingdom for excellency of his spirit, and learning, for he was one of the learnedst men of his time, yet sometimes he was put to dig in the common ditch to get bread for his family. What would we do if we were in such a condition as these men were? But above al set Christ before us, that professes that the Birds of the Air had nests, and the Foxes had holes, yet the Son of man had no place to hide his head in, that low condition he was in; the consideration of such things as these are very useful. It is likewise useful for men and women of estates to go to poor peoples houses and see how they live, to go to Hospitals, and to see the wounds of Soldiers and others, and to see the lamentable condition that people live in that live in some Alms-houses, and what poor fare they have, and what straights they are put to; you hear sometimes of them, but if you went to see them it would not only stir up charity in your selves towards them, but stir up thankfulness in your hearts towards God, it would be a special means to help you against any discontent, you would go away and see cause to bless God and say, if I were in such a condition as they are in, what should I do? How could I bear it? And yet what Reason is there that God doth so order and dispose of things that they should be so low in their estates and I so high: I know no Reason but free Grace, God will have mercy upon whom he will have mercy: These are some good Considerations for the furtherance of Contentment.

The

The Eighth CONSIDERATION.

A further Consideration may be this, *That before your conversion, before God wrought upon your souls, you were contented then with the world without grace, though you had no interest in God nor Christ, why cannot you now be contented with grace & spiritual things without the world?* If you your selves were content with the world without grace, ther's reason you should be content with grace without the world? Certainly ther's infinitly more reason. Yea, you see that many men of the world have a kind of Contentment, do not murmur nor repine when the world comes though they have no interest in God and Christ Then can'st not thou have as much Contentment with God and Christ without the world, as they can with the world without God and Christ? This is infinite shame it should be so.

The Ninth CONSIDERATION.

Yea consider when God hath given thee such Contentment, thou hast not given him the glory. When God hath let thee have thy hearts desire, what hast thou done with thy hearts desire? thou hast not been the better for it, it may be thou hast been the worse many times, and therefore let that satisfie thee: I meet with crosses, but when I had Contentment and al things comming in, God had but little or no glory from me, and therefore let that be a means now to quiet me in my discontented thoughts.

The Tenth CONSIDERATION

Yea lastly, Consider al the experience that you have had, of Gods doing good unto you in the want of many comforts When God crosses you, have you never had experience of abundance of good in afflictions? It's true, when a Minister only tels men that God will work good out of their afflictions, they hear them speak, and think they speak like good men, but they feel little or no good, they feel nothing but pain; but when we cannot only say to you, that God hath said he will

work good out of your afflictions, but we can say to you that you your selves have found it so by experience, that God hath made former afflictions to be great benefits to you, and that you would not have been without them, or without the good that came by them for a world; such experiences will exceedingly quiet the heart and work it to Contentment: therfore think thus with thy self, Lord, why may not this affliction work as great a good upon me as afflictions have done heretofore? Perhaps you may find many other Considerations besides in your own meditations, these are the principal ones that I have thought upon: I'le only ad one word more to this, of one that once was a great Merchant and Trades-man, and it happened on a time that he suffered Ship-rack, and saith he, I never made a better voyage and sail'd better than at that time that I suffered Ship-rack: this was a strange speech (his name was *Zeno*) that he should never make a better voyage: it would be a strange paradox to you that are Marriners, to say, thas thats a good voyage when you suffer Ship-rack: but he meant because he got so much good by it, God was pleased to bless it so far to him that he gained so much unto his soul by it, so much soul riches that he made account it was the best voyage that ever he had: and truly, sometimes it is so, yea, to you that are godly I make no question but you find it so, that your worst voyages have proved your best, when you have met with the greatest crosses in a voyage, God hath been pleased to turn them to a greater good to you in some other way. It's true, we may desire crosses that they may be turned to other advantages; but when God in his providence doth so order things, that you meet with ill voyages, you may expect that God will turn them to a greater good, and those that have been exercised in the waies of Godliness any long time, I make no question but they have abundance of experience that they have gain'd by them: You know sometimes it's better to be in a little Ship, for they have advantage of the greater ones in storms, many times in a storm a little Ship can thrust into a shallow place and so be safe, but your great Ships cannot, they must be abroad and toss't up and down in the storm and tempest, and so many times split against the rocks. And so it may be God sees there is a

storm

ſtorm a coming, and if thou beeſt in thy great Ship thou maieſt be ſplit upon rocks and ſands, God therefore doth put thee into a leſſer veſſel that thou maiſt be more ſafe. We wil lay aſide the ſpeaking of thoſe conſiderations now, but I would not have you lay them aſide and put them out of your thoughts, but labor (thoſe eſpecially that moſt concern you) to make uſe of them in the needful time when you find any diſcontentedneſs of ſpirit to ariſe in you.

But the main thing that I intend for this Exerciſe, It is propounding Directions what to do for the helping of our hearts to contentment. For as for any further conſiderations we have prevented the ſpeaking largely of them, becauſe we have opened the moſt things in ſhewing what the leſſons are that Chriſt teaches men, when he brings them into his School, to teach them this Art. I ſay there we have ſpoken of the ſpecial things that are moſt conſiderable for the helping of us to this Grace of Contentment. Therefore now all that I ſhal further do about this point, ſhal be the giving of ſome Directions what courſe to take that we may come to attain this Grace of Contentment.

The Firſt DIRECTION.

The Firſt is this, All the rules and helps in the world will do us little good except we get a good temper within in our Hearts; you can never make a Ship go ſteady with propping of it without, you know there muſt be ballaſt within the Ship, that muſt make it go ſteady: And ſo there is nothing without us that can keep our hearts in a ſteady conſtant way but that which is within us, Grace is within the ſoul and that wil do it.

The Second DIRECTION.

Secondly, If you would get a contented life, do not gripe too much of the world, do not take in more of the buſineſs of the world than God calls you to, be not greedy of taking in a great deal of the world, if a man will go among Thorns when he may go in a plainer way, there is no reaſon that this

man should complain that he is prick't with them; thou goest among Thorns, is it thy way? Must you of necessity go among them? Then it's another matter, but if thou wilt electivelie chuse that way when thou maist go another, then thou hast no cause to complain; so for men and women that wil put themselves upon things of the world that they need not, then no marvail though they be prick't, and meet with that that doth disquiet them? For such is the Nature of all things here in the world, that every thing hath some prick or other in it, we are like to meet with disappointments, and discontentments in every thing we meddle with, and therefore those that have least to do in the world, (that is except God calls them to it, we must put in that) they are like to meet with many things that wil discontent them.

The Third DIRECTION.

Thirdly, Be sure of thy call to every businesse thou goest about, though it be in the least businesse be sure of thy call to it: then whatever thou meetest withal thou maiest quiet thy heart with this, I know I am where God would have me; there's nothing in the world wil quiet the heart so much as this; when I meet with any crosses, I know I am where God would have me in my place and calling, I am about the work that God hath set me, Oh this will quiet and content thee when thou meetest with trouble: that that God calls a man to, with that he may have comfort whatever befals him, God is to look to thee, and to see thee blest if thou beest in the work God calls thee to.

The Fourth DIRECTION.

And especially if I add a Fourth Rule, and that is, *That I walk by rule in that work I am called to.* I am called to such a businesse, but I must mannage this work that I am called to by Rule, I must walk by the word, order my self in this businesse according to Gods mind so far as I am able, then add this to the other, and then the quiet and peace of that soul may be made even perfect in a kind, when I know it is not the work I put my self upon but God hath called me to it, and I walk by the

the rule of the Word in it, then let come what will come, God he is to take care of me there. It was a ſpeech of a Heathen (ſaith he) if thou wilt ſubject all things to thy ſelf, do thou ſubject thy ſelf to reaſon, and by that thou wilt make all things to be under thee; I may ad a little more to it, if you will ſubject all things under you, ſubject your ſelf to God, and then the truth is all things are under you; It hath been that which many times we have hinted, the reaſon why many of our Gentry have been ſo malignant among us is, becauſe they are willing to be ſlaves themſelves under ſome above them at Court, ſo they may keep their neighbors under to be ſlaves to them: for you know any man heretofore that was great at the Court, he could cruſh any Country man that he was angry withal. If there were an Arbitrary Government, then all thoſe that would be willing to be Vaſſals and ſlaves to the prince, they can make al others Vaſſals and ſlaves under them. Now be thou willing to be a vaſſal & ſlave to God, to be abſolutely under Gods command, and then (I ſay) all things in the world are under thee, *Al are yours* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *Life and Death* every thing is yours, and you are Chriſts, and Chriſt is Gods: All things in the world are ſerviceable to that man or woman that is ſerviceable to God. It is a mighty commendation of Gods ſervice, be thou willing to be ſerviceable to God, and God makes all things in the world to be thy ſervants, for ſo they are. You will ſay, How are they my ſervants, I cannot command them; They are ſervants in this, that God doth order them all to work for thy good, theres nothing in the world but (ſaith God) it ſhal worke for thy good, and be ſerviceable to thee, if thou wilt be ſerviceable to me: who would not be now Gods Servant; Subject thy ſelf to God, and all things ſhal be ſubjected to thee. Now ſo long as we keep within our bounds we are under protection, but if once we break our bounds we muſt expect it ſhould be with us as it is with the Deer in the park; while the Deer keep within the pale, there are no Dogs come upon them but they can feed quietly, but let the Deer be got without the pale. and then everie Dog in the Countrie will be hunting after them: So it is with men, let men and women keep within the bounds of the Command of

God

God, or the rule that God hath set them in his word, and then they are protected by God, and they may go about their busines with peace and never be troubled for any thing, but cast all their care upon God, God provides for them, but if they will go beyond the pale, if they will pass their bounds, then they may expect to meet with troubles, and afflictions, and discontent; and therefore that is a fourth direction. Walke by rule.

The Fifth DIRECTION.

A fift Rule is this, *Excercise much faith, that is the way for contentedness.* After thou hast done with all considerations that reason may suggest to thee, if thou findest that these do not do it, Oh then call for the grace of faith, a man may go very far with the use of reason alone to help him to Contentment, but when reason is at a non-plus, then set faith at worke. It was a speech of that reverend divine Master *Perkins* that God made so instrumentall in his time, the life of faith (saith he) it is a true life indeed, the only life. Exercise faith not only in that promise that all shall worke together for good to them that fear God, but likewise exercise faith in God himself, as wel as in his word in the Attributes of God. It was a speech of *Socrates* a Heathen, (saith he) since God is so carefull for you, what need you be carefull for any thing your selves; It was a strange speech of a Heathen.

Oh Christian! if thou hast any faith, in the time of extremity, thinke thus, This is the time that God cals for the exercise of faith, what canst thou do with thy faith if thou canst not quiet thy heart in discontent: It was the speech of one *Theodosius* that had been a King, and afterwards was brought to such a low condition to get his living by being a School-master, one comes and askes him, What have you got by your Phylosophy from *Plato* and others; What have I got (saith he) I have got this, That though my condition be changed from so high a condition to so low, yet I have got this, I can be content. So what doest thou get by being a Beleever, a Christian; what canst thou do by thy faith; I can do this, I can in all estates cast my care upon God, cast my burden upon God, I can commit my way

to

to God in peace, faith can do this. Therefore when reason can go no higher, let faith get upon the shoulders of reason and say, I see land though reason cannot see it, I see good that will come out of all this evil.

Exercise faith in thy often resignation of thy self to God, in giving of thy self up to God and his waies, the more thou dost in a beleeving way surrender up thy self to God, the more quiet and peace wilt thou have; that's the first thing.

The Sixth DIRECTION.

The sixth Direction for Contentment is T*o labor to be spiritually minded*; that is, be often in meditation of the things that are above, *If we be risen with Christ* (saith the Scripture) *let us seek the things that are above, where Christ is that sits at the right hand of God Col.* 3. 1. Be much in spiritual thoughts, in conversing with things above; many Christians that have an interest in the things of Heaven yet converse but very little with them, their meditations are not much upon Heavenly things. It is that that some give as the reason why *Adam* did not see his nakedness, some think that he had so much converse with God and with things above Sence, that he did not so much mind or think of nakedness what it was: but whether that were so or no I will not say, but this I say and am certain of, the reason why we are so troubled with our nakedness, with any wants that we have, it's because we converse so little with God, so little with spiritual things, the conversing with spiritual things would lift us above the things of the world; Those that are bit or stung with a Snake, it is because they tread upon the ground, if they could be lifted up above the earth they need never fear to be stung with the Snakes that are crawling underneath: so I may compare the sinful distemper of murmuring, and the temptations and evils that come from thence to be like Snakes that crawl up and down below, but if we could get higher we should not be stung by them. A Heavenly Conversation is the way for Contentment.

The

The Seventh DIRECTION.

A seventh rule is, *Do not promise to your selves too much beforehand, do not make account of too great things:* It is good for us to take hold very low and not think to pitch too high, do not soar too high in your thoughts beforehand, to think, Oh if I had this and this, and imagine great matters to your selves, but be as good *Jacob*, you know he was a man that lived a very contented life in a mean condition, (saith he) *Lord if I may but have cloaths to put on, and meat to eat*; he look'd no higher, he was content with that: so if we would not pitch our thoughts high and think that we might have what others have, so much, and so much, when we meet with disappointments we would not be so much troubled: and so *Paul, If we have but meat and drink and cloathing, let us be therewith content*; he did not soar too high aloft, those that look at high things in the world they meet with disappointments and so they come to be discontent; be as high as you wil in spiritual meditations, God gives liberty there to any of you to be as high as you wil, above Angels, but for your outward estate God would not have you aim at high things, *Seekest thou great things* (saith the Lord to *Baruch*) *seek them not, you shal have your life for a prey.* In these times especially, it were a very great evil for any to aim at great things, *Seek them not*, be willing to take hold low, and to creep low, and if God doth raise thee thou shalt have cause to bless him, but if thou shouldest not be raised there would not be much trouble, one that creeps low cannot fal far, but it is those that are on high whose fal doth bruise them most; that is a good rule, Promise not your selves great matters, neither aim at any great things in the world.

The Eighth DIRECTION.

Labor to get your hearts mortified to the world, dead to the world: We must not content our selves that we have gotten some reasoning above the vanity of the creature, & such kind of things as these are, but we must exercise mortification, and be crucified to the world, saith *Paul I die daily*, we should die daily to the

the world, *We are baptized into the death of Christ*, that is to signifie that we have taken such a profession as to profess to be even as dead men to the world; now there's are no crosses that fall out in the world that doth trouble those that are dead, if our hearts were dead to the world, we should not be much troubled with the changes of the world, nor the tossings about of worldly things. As it is very observable in those Soldiers that came to break the bones of Christ, they brake the legs of one that was crucified with him, and of the other, but when they came to Christ they found he was dead, and so they did not break his legs, there was a providence in it, to fulfil a Propheſie, but because they found he was dead, they did not break his bones. Let afflictions and trouble find thee with a mortified heart to the world and they wil not break thy bones; the bones of those that are broken by crosses and afflictions are those that are alive to the world, that are not dead to the world; but one that hath a mortified heart and dead to the world, no afflictions or troubles will break the bones of such a one, that is, they wil not be very grievous or painful to such a one as is mortified to the world: This I fear is a mystery and riddle to many, for one to be dead to the world, to be mortified to the world Now it is not my work to open to you what Mortification is, or death to the world is, but only thus, To have our hearts so taken off from the things of the world, as to use them as if one used them not, not to make account that our lives, our comforts, our happiness doth consist in these things, they are things that are of another nature that our happiness doth consist in, and we may be happy without these, this is a kind of deadness to the world.

The Ninth DIRECTION.

Let not men and women pore too much upon their afflictions, that is, busie their thoughts too much to look down into their afflictions; you shal have many people that al their thoughts are taken up about what their crosses and afflictions are, they are altogether thinking and speaking of them, it's just with them as with a child that hath a sore about him, his finger is

alwaies upon the sore; and so men and women their thoughts are alwaies upon their afflictions, when they awake in the night their thoughts are upon their afflictions, and when they converse with others (nay it may be when they are praying to God) they are thinking of their afflictions. Oh! no marvel though you live a discontented life, if your thoughts be alwaies poring upon such things, you should rather labor to have your thoughts upon those things that may comfort you: You shal have many that if you propound any rule to them to do them good. they take it wel while they are with you, and thank you for it, but when they are gone they soon forget it. It is very observable of *Jacob*, that when his wife died in Child-birth, his wife called the child *Ben-oni*, that is, a son of sorrows; now *Jacob*, he thought with himself, If I should cal this child *Ben-oni*, every time that I name him, it wil put me in mind of the death of my dear wife, and of that affliction, and that wil be a continued affliction to me, therefore I wil not have my child have that name; and so the text saith, that *Jacob* called his name *Benjamin*, and that was, the son of my right hand: now this is to shew us thus much that when afflictions befal us, we should not give way to have our thoughts continually upon them, but rather upon those things that may stir up our thankfulness to God for mercies. It is the Similitude of *Basil* a learned man, saith he, It is in this case as it is with men and women that have sore eyes, now it's not fit for those to be alwaies looking upon the fire, or upon the beams of the Sun; no (saith he) one that hath sore eyes must get things that are suitable to him, and such objects that are fit for one that hath weak eyes, therefore they wil get green colours, as that being a more easie colour and better for weak eyes, and they wil hang a green Sarsnet before their eyes because it is more suitable to them: So weak spirits it's the very same, a man or woman that hath a weak spirit, they must not be looking upon the fire of their afflictions, upon those things that deject, that cast them down, but they are to be looking rather upon that which may be suitable for the healing and helping of them, they should be considering of those things rather than the other. It wil be of very great use and benefit to you if you do lay it to heart, not to be poring alwaies upon afflictions but upon mercies.

The

The Tenth DIRECTION.

I beseech you observe this, though you should forget many others. *Make a good interpretation of Gods waies toward you*, if there can be any good interpretation made of Gods waies towards you, make it. You think it much if you have a friend that should alwaies make bad interpretations of your waies towards him, you wil take that il: if you shonld converse with people that you cannot speak a word in their hearing, but they are ready to make an il interpretation of it, and take it in an ill sense, you would think their company to be very tedious to you. It is very tedious to the Spirit of God when we make such ill interpretations of his waies towards us. If God deal with us otherwise than we would have him, if there can be any sense worse than other made of it, we will be sure to make it; as thus: When an affliction doth befal you, there may be many good senses made of Gods Works towards you, you should think thus, It may be God intends only to try me by this, it may be God saw my Heart too much set upon the Creature, and so intends to shew me what there is in my heart, it may be that God saw that if my estate did continue I should fal into sin, that the better my estate were, the worse my soul would be, it may be God intended only to exercise some Grace, it may be God intends to prepare me for some great work which he hath for me. Thus you should reason.

But we on the contrary make bad interpretations of Gods thus dealing with us and say, God doth not mean this, surely the Lord means by this, to manifest his wrath and displeasure against me, and this is but a furtherance of further evils that he intends towards me: Just as they did in the Wilderness, *God hath brought us hither to slay us.* This is the worst interpretation that possibly you can make of Gods waies: Oh! Why wil you make these worst interpretations when there may be better? In 1 *Cor.* 1.3.5. When the Scripture speaks of love, saith the text, *Love thinketh no evil.* Love is of that nature that if there may be ten interpretations made of a thing, if nine of them be naught, and one good, Love will take that which is good

and leave the other nine; and so though there might be ten interpretations presented to thee concerning Gods waies towards thee, and if but one be good and nine naught, thou shouldest take that one that is good and leave the other nine: I beseech you consider, God doth not deal by you as you deal with him, should God make the worst interpretation of al your waies towards him, as you do of his towards you, it would be very ill with you, God is pleased to manifest his love thus to us, to make the best interpretations of what we do, and therefore it is, that God doth put a sense upon the actions of his people that one would think could hardly be, as thus, God is pleased to call those perfect that have but any uprightness of heart in them, he accounteth them perfect, *Be ye perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect*; uprightness in Gods sense is perfection. Now alas when we look into our own hearts we can scarce see any good at al there, and yet God is pleased to make such an interpretation as to say, it is perfect: When we look into our own hearts we can see nothing but uncleanness, God, he calls you his Saints, he calls the meanest Christian that hath the least grace under the greatest corruption, his Saint; you say, we cannot be Saints here, but yet in Gods esteem we are Saints: You know the usual title the holy Ghost gives (in several of the Epistles) to those that had any grace, any uprightness, is, *To the Saints* in such a place; you see what an interpretation God puts upon them, they are Saints to him, and so I might name in divers other particulars, God makes the best interpretation of things; if there be abundance of evil and a little good, God rather passes by the evil and takes notice of the good: That sometimes I have made use of, which is a very observable place in *Peter* concerning *Sarah*, *Sarah* had a speech to her husband in *Genesis*, 18. 12. she called her husband Lord, but there was but that one good word in an ill speech, it was an unbeleeving speech, but yet when the Apostle mentions that speech in 1 *Pet.* 3. 6. the holy Ghost leaves all the ill, and commends her for calling her husband Lord, for putting a reverent title upon her husband; thus how graciously doth God deal with us? If there be but one good word among a great many ill, what an interpretation God makes! so should we do, if there be but any one-

one good interpretation that we can make of a thing we ſhould rather make uſe of the good one than of the ill; Oh my brethren, (I would I could now ſpeak only to ſuch as are godly) retain good thoughts of God, take heed of judging God to be a hard maſter, make good interpretations of his waies, and that's a ſpecial means to help you to contentment in all your courſes.

The Eleventh DIRECTION.

Do not ſo much regard the fancies of other men, as what indeed you feel your ſelves; For the reaſon of our diſcontentment many times, is rather from the fancies of other men, than from what we find we want our ſelves, we think poverty to be ſuch a great evil, why? Becauſe it is ſo eſteemed by others, more than what people feel in it themſelves, except they be in extremity of poverty: I'le give you an evident demonſtration that almoſt all the diſcontent in the world is rather from the fancies of others than from the evil that is upon themſelves. You that think your eſtates to be low, and you are thereupon diſcontent, and it is a grievous affliction to you, but if all men in the World were poorer than you, then you would not be diſcontent, then you would rejoyce in your eſtates, though you had not a penny more than you have: As take a man that can get but his twelve pence a day, and you will ſay, this were but a poor thing to maintain a Family? But ſuppoſe there were no man in the world that had more than this, yea that all other men but your ſelves had ſomewhat leſs wages than you, then you would think your condition pretty good; you ſhould have no more then than you have now, therefore it appears by this that it's rather from the fancies of other men than what you feel that makes you think your condition to be ſo grievous, for if all the men in the world look't upon you as happy, more happy than themſelves, then you would be contented; Oh let not your happineſs depend upon the fancies of other men. It is a ſpeech of *Chryſoſtom* I remember in this very caſe, Let us not make the people in this caſe to be our Lords, as we muſt not make men to be the Lords of our faith, ſo not the Lords of our comforts; that is, that our comfort ſhould depend more upon their imaginations;

ginations than upon what we feel in our selves. It may be others think you to be in an afflicted condition, yea but I thank God, for my self I do not so apprehend it, were it not for the disgrace, disesteem and slightings of other men, my condition would not be so bad to me as now it is; this is that which makes my condition afflictive.

The Twelfth DIRECTION.

Be not inordinately taken up with the comforts of this world when you have them. When you have them do not take too much content in them: that's a certain rule, that Look how inordinate any man or woman is in sorrow when a comfort is taken from them, so much immoderate were they in the rejoycing in the comfort when they had it: as now for instance, God takes away a child and you are inordinately sorrowful, beyond what God allowes in a natural or Christian way, now though I never knew before how your heart was towards the child, yet when I see this (though you be a meer stranger to me) I may without breach of charitie conclude that your heart was immoderately set upon your child or husband, or upon any other comfort that I see you grieving for, when God hath taken it away, If you hear ill tidings about your estates, and your hearts are dejected immoderately, and you are in a discontented way because of such and such a cross, certainly your hearts were immoderately set upon the world, anb so likewise for your credit, if you hear others report this of that ill of you, and your hearts are dejected because you thinke you suffer in your name, your hearts were inordinately set upon your name and credit, now therefore the way for you not to be immoderate in your sorrows for afflictions, it is not to be immoderate in your love and delights when you have prosperity. And these are the principal Directions for our help that we may live quiet, and contented lives.

My brethren, to conclude all for this point, If I could tell you that I knew how to shew you a way never to be in want of any thing, I make no question but then we should have much flocking to such a Sermon, when a man should undertake to manifest

manifeſt to people that they ſhould never be in want any more, but I have been now preaching unto you that that comes to as much, that which countervails this, that which is in effect all one. Is it not almoſt al one, never to be in want, or never to be without Contentment? that man or woman that is never without a contented ſpirit, truly, can never be ſaid to want much; Oh! the Word holds forth a way ful of comfort and peace to the people of God even in this world, you may live happie lives in the midſt of al the ſtorms and tempeſts in the world, there is an Ark that you may come into, and no men in the world may live ſuch comfortable, cheerful, and contented lives as the Saints of God: Oh that we had learned this Leſſon: I have been many Sermons about this Leſſon of Contentment, but I am afraid that you will be Longer in Learning of it, than I have been preaching of it; it is a harder thing to learn it than it is to ſpeak or preach it. (I remember) I have read of one man reading of that place in the 39. *Pſal, I wil take heed that I offend not with my tongue*: ſaith he, I have been this 38. yeers a learning this leſſon and have not learned it throughly. The truth is, there are many (I am afraid) that have been profeſſors neer eight and thirtie yeers, have hardly learn't this leſſon; it were a good leſſon for young Profeſſors to begin to learn this betimes. But now, this leſſon of Chriſtian Contentment it is as hard, and perhaps you may be many yeers in learning it: I am afraid there be ſome Chriſtians that have not yet learned, *Not to offend groſly with their tongues*: The Scripture ſaith *all a mans Religion is vain, if he cannot bridle his tongue*; therefore, thoſe that make any profeſſion of godlineſs, one would think they ſhould quickly learn this leſſon, ſuch a leſſon that except learned, it makes al their Religion vain: But for this Leſſon of Chriſtian Contentment it may take up more time to learn, and there's many that are learning it al the daies of their lives and yet are not Proficients; but God forbid that it ſhould be ſaid of any of us concerning this Leſſon, as the Apoſtle ſaith of Widows in *Timothy*; *That they were ever learning & never came to the knowledg of the truth.* Oh let us not be ever learning this Leſſon of Contentment and yet never come to have skil in it. You would think it much if you had uſed the Sea

twenty

ty yeers, and yet to have attained to no skill in your art of Navigation, you wil say, I have used the Sea 20. or 30. yeers and I hope I may know by this time what belongs to Sea; Oh that you would but say so in respect of the Art of Christianity! When there is any thing that's spoken concerning the duty of a Christian. Oh that Christians could but say I have been a Christian thus long, and I hope I am not to seek in such a thing that is so necessary for a Christian; here is a necessary lesson for a Christian that *Paul* said. *He had learned in all estates therewith to be content.* Oh! be not content with your selves til you have learned this lesson of Christian Contentment, gotten some better skill in it than heretofore.

Now there is in the text another Lesson which is a hard Lesson, *I have learned to Abound*, that doth not so neerly concern us at this time, because the times are afflictive times, and there is now (more than ordinary) an uncertainty in all things in the world, in such times as these are, there are few that have such an abundance that they need to be much taught in that lesson.

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